

THE TIMES

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FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS: taken and details, pages 16, 26. Plus 8 pages of APPOINTMENTS

'We are the very best of friends...we love each other as well very much, and it's great'

Family wedding at Windsor for Prince Edward

By ALAN HAMILTON

PRINCE EDWARD is determined to have a family wedding rather than a public spectacle when he crowns a five-year courtship by marrying Sophie Rhys-Jones later this year.

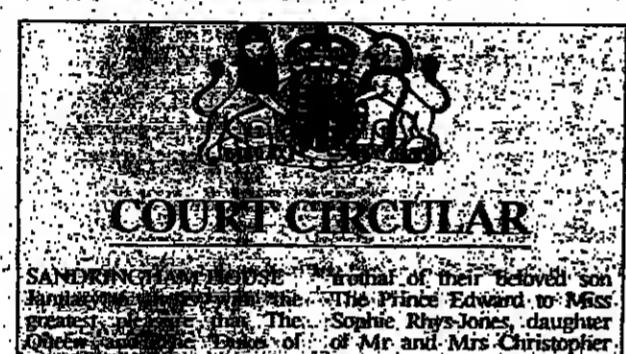
The couple, whose engagement was announced by Buckingham Palace yesterday, will marry in the late spring or early summer at St. George's Chapel, the spiritual home of the Order of the Garter inside Windsor Castle. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were said to be thrilled at the news of their youngest son's impending marriage to the 33-year-old public relations executive.

Miss Rhys-Jones's parents — whose permission the prince sought as well as that of his own — said at their home near Tintagel, Wells, that they were equally delighted by the announcement.

Senior Palace sources insisted privately last night that the decision not to turn his wedding into a major tourist attraction in central London was the Prince's alone, and that he had not faced any pressure from the Queen or Downing Street to arrange a scaled-down ceremony more in keeping with the mood of Blunt Britain.

But sources acknowledged that the 34-year-old Prince was "not unconscious" of changes in public perception of the monarchy since the last big royal wedding: that of the Duke and Duchess of York in Westminster Abbey in 1986.

Posing for photographs in the garden of St James's Palace yesterday, the Prince said he had a particular fondness



COURT CIRCULAR

SANDRINGHAM HOUSE The official announcement in *The Times* Court Circular. Page 24

Best friends Page 3

Divorce Page 4

James Brown Page 22

the Prince had not lived together during their long association, but it is a fine definition. A suite of rooms at Buckingham Palace was put at her disposal early in the courtship, and she has used them frequently.

She has also been a regular companion of the Prince at Royal Family gatherings, including the annual summer holiday at Balmoral and the Christmas break at Sandringham, where for several years she has joined the Queen and other members of the family at Christmas Day.

The Prince and Miss Rhys-Jones are several years older than the average age for first marriage, and have had ample opportunity to get to know each other well. The Prince has been exceedingly careful in ensuring that he has picked the right partner. A successful union has great potential to restore the monarchy's standing; another failure would be a dangerously damaging blow to public perception of the institution.

He acknowledged as much yesterday when he said: "We are the very best of friends, and that's essential. It also helps that we happen to love each other as well very much, and it's great. We are very happy at the moment, and long may it continue."

The Prince finally proposed to Miss Rhys-Jones shortly before Christmas, putting an end to an agonizingly long wait. Apart from a natural caution engendered by the marital fate of his siblings, he was keen to wait until anniversary mourning for the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, was well past.

Both parties were also anxious to put their professional careers on a sound footing.

The Prince has spent several years building up his television company, Ardent Productions, making several documentaries on royal history and therefore well aware of the potential for good or harm for the monarchy's future that lies in his hands. Miss Rhys-

Jones is now a partner in a successful London public relations consultancy.

Both said yesterday that they intended to continue working.

They plan to live relatively modestly at Bagshot Park, the house in Surrey leased by Prince Edward last year.

Congratulations flowed in as soon as the news became

public. A spokesman for the Prime Minister, who was told before he left the Seychelles for an official visit to South Africa, said that both Tony and Che

rie Blair were delighted. William Hague and Paddy Ashdown also sent their good wishes, as did Dr George Carey and Cardinal Basil Hume.

Sophie Rhys-Jones and Prince Edward announcing their long-awaited engagement yesterday after a five-year courtship

**Blair speaks
up for Brown**

Tony Blair tried to halt feuding between rival teams at 10 and 11 Downing Street with a declaration of support for Gordon Brown, saying: "We will always work as a team. This partnership is built to last". Page 2

TV & RADIO **WEATHER** **CROSSWORDS** **LETTERS** **OBITUARIES** **ANATOLE KALEISKY** **ARTS** **CHESS & BRIDGE** **COURT & SOCIAL** **LAW REPORT** **BOOKS** **TRAVEL**

Flu crisis at hospitals dents Dobson's waiting list hopes

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S intensive care service is in crisis, doctors said yesterday as figures were released showing that the number of reported flu cases had risen by more than 80 per cent in a week.

With an epidemic looming, the Government's waiting list initiative is in danger of being knocked off course, even though Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, announced yesterday that for the seventh month in a row the number of people waiting for an operation had fallen.

But Mr Dobson had to admit that even though the waiting lists had dropped by 31,000 during November, the number may have risen again last month because of the



"A hospital bed? Now
this is extremely rare"

surge of accident and emergency cases, particularly from flu victims.

Waiting lists are now down to 1,162,000 — close to the level they were at the time of the gen-

eral election, having fallen from a peak of 1,297,000 in March. As the fall was announced, however, hospital managements were already cancelling hundreds of operations to clear beds for flu emergencies. Doctors baulking to cope with the sudden rush for beds were pessimistic. "The intensive care service is in crisis," Paul Lawler, President of the Intensive Care Society, said.

Although it is causing chaos in hospitals and numbers are rising sharply, flu has officially reached anything like epidemic proportions. The latest figures show that 97,100 people caught the infection last week compared to 53,200 a week earlier — a rise of 83 per cent. However this is still only 185 cases per 100,000 of the population over the week, well below the epidemic level of

400 per 100,000. Numbers are expected to peak in the coming week.

Anne Widdecombe, Shadow Health Secretary, visited University College Hospital in Mr Dobson's Holborn constituency. She said the senior accident and emergency consultant there told her that things were under control because the hospital had shifted resources from waiting list surgery to deal with emergencies.

"Here is the proof of what the British Medical Association and the Opposition have been saying for months, which is that the political emphasis on the waiting list pledge has distorted priorities elsewhere and put patients in danger, fear and discomfort," she said.

Patients refused, page 9

Leading article, page 23

Shares keep on climbing

The stock market climbed to within touching distance of its record high as international markets continued to rally.

The FTSE 100 index closed up 190.6 points at 6148.8, just 30.2 points below last July's peak. Trading was heavy as investors overcame fears about the euro conversion.

In New York the Dow Jones rose more than 200 points to pass 9,500 points for the first time. Page 27

**Sierra Leone
flares up again**

The Foreign Office is telling all Britons to leave Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, after a combined force of rebels and members of the ousted military junta entered the city. Warnings were broadcast on the World Service as the Sierra Leone Government said that anyone on the streets would be regarded as a rebel and shot. Page 18

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60F: the hottest January day for 150 years

By TIM JONES

LONDON yesterday enjoyed its hottest January day for more than 150 years, but severe flooding brought chaos to households and motorists in northern England.

The capital saw the thermometer climb to 15.7C (60F), equalling the temperature recorded in 1841 and beating by a fraction of a degree the century's previous record, which was set at Kensington Palace 77 years ago.

But while southerners took to their shirtsleeves, people in the North were bailing out water.

Kent was almost cut off as torrential overnight rain forced police to shut A-roads which disappeared under several feet of water. More than 50 homes in the town were flooded and fire crews had to use a boat to rescue seven people from a care centre for the disabled.

The South has been basking in a warm, southwesterly wind from the Continent. But this will change direction by the weekend to be replaced by a

band of damp low pressure from the Atlantic. The Meteorological Office said the warm spell would give way rapidly to more seasonal weather, with temperatures struggling to reach 7C or 8C (44F-46F) by the weekend.

The worst is yet to come. Winter is back with a vengeance next week as meteorologists predict an easterly wind bringing cold from the North Sea.

US snow, page 16
Forecast, page 26

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Trade minister is the biggest earner from shares



Lord Sainsbury of Turville

By JAMES LANDALE

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE extraordinary scale of Lord Sainsbury of Turville's wealth was revealed yesterday when it emerged that the junior Trade and Industry Minister received £36 million in dividend payments last year.

An independent research body found that Lord Sainsbury received seven times more in dividend payments than any other company director.

The size of the dividends could come as fresh embarrassment to ministers, amid growing concern at the

role of wealthy businessmen in government. Like Geoffrey Robinson, the millionaire who recently resigned as Paymaster General, Lord Sainsbury has faced questions about offshore trusts and the extent of his generosity towards Labour.

The peer, who joined the Government last July, is one of Labour's biggest donors. He gave £2 million to party coffers before the general election and £1 million afterwards to help to clear the party's overdraft. He also funded Progress, the new Labour magazine.

The findings came from an analysis of company records by Labour Re-

search, an independent organisation funded by several trade unions but unconnected to the Labour Party. The group discovered 136 directors from 91 companies who received more than £500,000 in dividends in the financial year ending February 1998.

Lord Sainsbury came at the top of the list after receiving dividends worth £36,047,866. The next highest earner was David Instone, chairman of a Kent-based printing firm, who received £5,249,966.

Other politicians on the list were Lord Harris of Peckham, the carpet millionaire and Tory becker, who received £2.6 million; Sir Tim Sains-

bury, the former Tory MP, who received £1.8 million; and Michael Heseltine, the former Tory Deputy Prime Minister, who earned £674,854 from his shareholdings in Haymarket publishers. Celebrities from the music world included George Harrison and Yoko Ono, who each earned £2.5 million.

Lord Sainsbury derives his wealth from an estimated £1.4 billion shareholding in the family supermarket chain. The last dividend payment from his shares was made days before he was appointed the minister responsible for science and technology. He immediately placed his entire

shareholding into a blind trust, handing over full control of the portfolio to the trustees.

The move, required by the ministerial code of conduct, avoids potential conflicts of interest between his ministerial duties and his personal investments. Although Lord Sainsbury — who earns no salary as a minister — has no control over the investments, he can continue to receive income from them.

But the peer is more generous to philanthropic causes than political ones. He donated £200 million in Sainsbury shares to the Gatsby Charitable Foundation in the early 1990s.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Orange faction behind bomb

A new loyalist paramilitary group claimed responsibility last night for a bomb attack on a Gaelic sports club which left a workman slightly injured. The Orange Volunteers said it planted the small booby-trap device which exploded at midday outside the GAA club in Magherafelt, Co Londonderry. In a coded statement the group said: "The wider nationalist community now have everything to fear, now the siege of Ulster continues, with the British Government abandoning the loyalist people and the Irish Government standing up for republicans the Orange Volunteers are ready to defend our people."

The Volunteers, who oppose the Good Friday accord, emerged in November when eight armed, hooded men threatened to "assassinate the enemies of Ulster", particularly free IRA prisoners. Last month it claimed responsibility for a grenade attack on a bar in Crumlin, Co Antrim.

Meningitis death

A teenage boy who fell ill with meningitis after attending a Christmas party in Poynton, has died. Trevor Stockin, 16, lost his fight for life at Macclesfield District General Hospital, Cheshire. The teenager had been in hospital for a week. A 17-year-old college student who also attended the party has been treated for the same strain of meningococcal meningitis.

Sacking payout

A company that sacked a man after accusing him of lighting up in his car on its no-smoking site has paid him an undisclosed sum. John Dixon, 54, a shift supervisor, who denied smoking, had planned to take his case to an employment tribunal. Parkside Flexible Packaging of Wakefield claimed that a security camera recorded a flash as Mr Dixon lit a cigarette.

Dome pay claim

Workers on the Underground rail link to the Millennium Dome have demanded bonuses of up to £5,000 to finish the £2.8 billion project in time for the 2000 celebrations. Six hundred electricians want bonuses paid at the end of their contracts if the Jubilee Line extension, from Green Park to Stratford, east London, is completed by November.

N-waste protest

Hundreds of demonstrators objecting to plans for a nuclear waste dump in one of the most scenic parts of west Wales laid siege to the Welsh Office yesterday. The Anglo-Irish consortium behind the dump says the remote site is ideal for storing nuclear material, but the proposal has met an angry response in the tourism, fishing and farming heartland of Pembrokeshire.

Polish ruling

Poland's Supreme Court lifted an arrest warrant that accused Helena Wolinska, 79, wife of a former Oxford don, of fabricating evidence used to convict and hang a Second World War Resistance hero in 1953. Ms Wolinska, married to Wladimir Brus, Emeritus Professor of Modern Russian and East European Studies, feared extradition. She has lived in Britain since 1972.

Plank walked

An important exhibit dating from Viking times has been lost after a workman at Ireland's National Museum threw it on a skip because he thought it was rubbish. The oak plank from the gunwhale of a 12th-century ship measured 10ft by 4ft and displayed typical Viking ship-building techniques. It was of great value in the study of ancient ocean-going vessels.

Business issues tartan tax warning

By JASON ALLARDYCE
SCOTTISH POLITICAL REPORTER

ALMOST one in ten firms could pull out of Scotland if the new Scottish parliament uses its income tax-raising powers, according to a new report.

The survey of 111 Scottish business leaders by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland found widespread hostility to the so-called tartan tax. Sixty per cent of those surveyed believed that the tax-raising powers would be "detrimental" to their businesses and 7 per cent would look to move if it made trading difficult.

Businesses fear wage costs could soar

putting them at a competitive disadvantage if the new parliament exercises its power to increase income tax by up to 3p. They believe that jobs would also be shed as a result.

Labour and the Scottish Tories have ruled out using the powers during the first term of the new parliament, which will be elected in May. The Scottish National Party has not finalised its position, but the Liberal Democrats are prepared to put up to 2p on the rate of income tax for health and education investment if savings cannot be made elsewhere.

The Scottish Tory leader, David McLetchie, claimed that the SNP and Lib-

eral Democrats would levy the tartan tax immediately, given the chance, and that they must consider the voice of business.

David Spence, president of the accountants' institute, added: "It is vital that business is listened to as the success of this group will keep the Scottish economy strong. Politicians who wield the new tax-raising powers should take heed of these findings."

The survey found that four in ten business leaders believe that the tax-raising powers will make no real difference and that one in five are either committed to remaining in Scotland or are adopting a "wait and see" approach.



John Prescott putting the Commons Christmas tree through a chipper yesterday as part of efforts to boost recycling

Blair pledges support for his Chancellor

Prime Minister wants to end party feuding, Jill Sherman reports from South Africa

THE Prime Minister moved swiftly yesterday to bolster Gordon Brown's position and put an end to the simmering feud between the rival camps of the two men, which has rocked the Government in recent weeks.

Tony Blair used his first public comments since the resignation of Peter Mandelson to underline the Chancellor's role in promoting new Labour and making the party electable.

Looking tanned but visibly strained after his week's holiday in the Seychelles, Mr Blair insisted that his relations with the Chancellor were as close as ever. "Gordon's work in crucial to the creation of new Labour and winning the election. We have always worked as a team and we will always work as a team," he said. "This partnership is built to last."

He dismissed as rubbish the suggestion that there was a rift. "Gordon and I have worked together for 15 years. We were probably the two people who did most to draw up the policy of new Labour."

The Prime Minister said that it was time to draw a line under recent "events", which have seen the resignation of two ministers and a press aide, and get on with delivering Labour's election promises. To what will be seen as a re-

events. During his holiday he worked two to three hours a day at his computer as well as talking by telephone with Alastair Campbell, his press secretary, Mr Brown and other ministers who were promoted in the mini reshuffle.

Mr Blair chose himself to refer to his relationship with Mr Brown following the resignation of Charlie Whelan, the Chancellor's press secretary, after he had been persistently blamed for leaking details of the £373,000 loan to Mr Mandelson. The Chancellor was said to be "desolate" about the departure of one of his most powerful and loyal supporters.

Downing Street was said to have been determined that Mr Whelan should go after the row provoked by Mr Mandelson's resignation. But Mr Blair was adamant that the departure was handled in a way which was least damaging to Mr Brown.

Insiders said that the newspaper headlines following Mr Whelan's announcement had not been good for Mr Brown, but they would have been a lot worse if the Chancellor had been forced to sack his press aide. They also made clear that the Prime Minister expected Mr Whelan to go within the next week rather than remain

a target for Tory attacks. Mr Blair said he had no intention of being diverted from his New Labour programme of modernisation. He said that Mr Mandelson's departure would have no impact on the close relations with the Liberal Democrats and he suggested these could get even closer if it was in the interests of the country.

He also pointed out that the new appointments to the Cabinet — Steven Byers and Alan Milburn — were both modernisers; adding that Mr Byers,

the new Trade and Industry Secretary, was as enthusiastic about helping business to prepare for the euro as Mr Mandelson had been.

During a series of interviews with the British media on his arrival in Pretoria last night, Mr Blair said that he had no regrets about taking a holiday during such a critical period of his government. He said: "I have had eight days with my family, and I feel better for it. I have not had a proper day off since the Omagh bombing in Au-

gust." Mr Blair's efforts to present a united front were backed by Mr Prescott yesterday. He said that reports of a pact between himself and Mr Brown to exploit the departure of Mr Mandelson, which arose from a newspaper interview he gave last week, were "nonsense".

The Deputy Prime Minister, along with Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, was at pains to draw a distinction between the present Government and its Tory predecessors by emphasising there was no ideological split round the Cabinet table.

"Mr Prescott said: "The divisions with them were on substance, ours have been highlighted on personalities rather than the Government's record."

David Clark, the former Cabinet minister sacked in last summer's reshuffle, said that the "unhappy events" of recent weeks should lead to the Government adopting a more collegiate style.

Mr Clark, who was sacked in

July, backed page six

Barristers to launch Kitemark scheme

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

BARRISTERS' chambers are to be kite-marked to stamp out disreputable practices such as double-booking of cases.

The scheme will be introduced this year as part of reforms to modernise the Bar overseen by Dan Brennan, QC, the new chairman who took over this week.

The Bar is also to reconsider the rule that people cannot approach a barrister direct but must come through a solicitor. Already it allows professional bodies to deal directly with barristers: this month it is to consider licensing bodies such as trade unions, charities, health insurers and health authorities to brief barristers directly.

The Bar Council will publish the criteria for the kite-mark plan later this year. They are likely to include how cases are managed, how time is billed to the client, how fees are charged and how well barristers communicate with clients. In particular it could stamp out the problem of late-returned briefs or instructions, causing a barrister to pull out of a trial at the last minute.

From Easter, chambers can apply for accreditation, or the Bar equivalent of a Kitemark, which will be granted by one of several outside organisations that have been approved by the Bar Council.

The meeting between Mr Mandelson and Mr Brown will raise eyebrows at Westminster, where the supporters of both men have been at daggers drawn for years. Although they were once close

Brown advises Mandelson on his comeback

By ROLAND WATSON, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

GORDON BROWN has been advising Peter Mandelson about how to make a return to the political front line, possibly before the next election.

The pair, whose recent past has been marred by personal suspicion and the aggressive rivalry of their aides, have had a lengthy meeting with the full encouragement of Tony Blair.

The meeting provides clear evidence that Mr Mandelson is already turning his mind to a return to office less than a fortnight after he resigned over his £373,000 home loan from Geoffrey Robinson. The former Trade Secretary has already told friends: "I will be back."

Mr Mandelson's friends said it was far too early to speculate about the timing of any such return, but he and Mr Brown have discussed the possibility of his spending some time in Africa involved in charity work. As a student he travelled to Tanzania and later addressed Third World issues while working for the British Youth Council. Friends say that he is considering an offer from Voluntary Services Overseas to make a film abroad.

The meeting between Mr Mandelson and Mr Brown will raise eyebrows at Westminster, where the supporters of both men have been at daggers drawn for years. Although they were once close

friends, the leadership contest to succeed John Smith forced them apart after Mr Mandelson backed Mr Blair.

The meeting, which is part of a concerted effort by senior Labour figures to heal the deep divisions that have emerged from the wreckage of the home loan episode, has added irony. It was advice from Mr Mandelson to Mr Brown that sparked the freeze in their relations.

The advice, in the form of a memo, was published earlier this week as part of the serialisation of an unauthorised biography of Mr Mandelson by Paul Routledge.

However, Mr Mandelson's friends say that he regards the support from the Chancellor as genuine and helpful.

Mr Brown: offered help to his old adversary

Mr Brown: offered help to his old adversary

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eral Democrats would levy the tartan tax immediately, given the chance, and that they must consider the voice of business.

David Spence, president of the accountants' institute, added: "It is vital that business is listened to as the success of this group will keep the Scottish economy strong. Politicians who wield the new tax-raising powers should take heed of these findings."

The survey found that four in ten business leaders believe that the tax-raising powers will make no real difference and that one in five are either committed to remaining in Scotland or are adopting a "wait and see" approach.



The gunwhale of a 12th-century ship, which was found in the River Thames in 1982, is on display at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London. The plank is made of oak and is 10ft long and 4ft wide. It is believed to be from the hull of a Viking longship.

Happiness is being best friends

The engaged couple were at ease with each other and the media's awkward questions, reports Alan Hamilton

THEY looked at each other a lot, and they laughed a lot. As Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones faced the press in the garden of St James's Palace yesterday, they seemed quietly and deeply at ease with each other.

There was none of the woodiness of a similar occasion when the Prince of Wales and Diana Spencer announced their betrothal, nor any awkward observations of the culture of Prince Charles's remark about being in love, "whatever that is". Nor was there the overtone touchy-feely nature of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson's announcement, when they all but threw buns at each other.

And nor, mercifully, was there a repetition of a previous encounter with the media. When Prince Edward flounced out of a press conference, angered by journalists' undignified failure to be knocked out by *It's A Royal Knockout*. The time has mellowed Prince Edward, and Miss Rhys-Jones knows a thing or two about public relations. They emerged from the palace arm in arm, she in a short-skirted grey suit with diamante trim on the lapels, he in a dark suit. They could have been a couple of moderately successful City traders getting hitched.

They posed for pictures by the door and strolled around the garden for more. The January sky was a heavenly blue. The cameramen asked them to kiss. They seemed at first to demur, but when the photographers chorused that their masters would go mad if they did not return with a kiss picture, the couple agreed.

They answered questions with good humour, standing close together, but easily. Miss

Rhys-Jones's ring hand rested on the Prince's forearm, and she looked up at him a great deal, but not in that sugary, over-rehearsed way that showbiz brides-to-be so often adopt.

Asked why the couple got on, Prince Edward smiled as she gazed at him: "I don't know, we just do, really." Miss Rhys-Jones chimed in: "I think we share a lot of interests, we laugh a lot, we have a great friendship."

The Prince turned serious momentarily when asked why they had decided to announce the engagement now. "It's impossible for anyone else to understand why it has taken me this long," he said. "But I don't think it would have been right before, and I don't think Sophie would have said Yes if I had asked her before, and, hopefully, by the fact that she did say Yes, I must have got the timing right." The seriousness dissolved into laughter, and he shot his bride-to-be an intimate glance.

How exactly did he propose? "Well, I spoke it," said the Prince, with a tiny hint of mock exasperation. "I managed to take her completely by surprise. She had no idea it was coming, which was what I really wanted to do. The trouble is, everybody always speculating always made it very difficult. Every time there was another round of speculation I had to go very quiet again."

Miss Rhys-Jones adopted a particularly adoring look. "I was slightly stunned for a minute. Then I suddenly realised I should actually answer the question. I said Yes. Yes please." She let out the hint of a girlish giggle.

The exchange took on a slightly more serious note when questioning turned to



Sealed with a kiss: Sophie Rhys-Jones and Prince Edward as they spoke to the massed ranks of the press yesterday in the garden of St James's Palace

the wedding venue. The Prince said: "I just have always enjoyed St George's and Windsor especially. It's just a wonderful setting. It's a glorious piece of architecture and it's somewhere slightly different."

The last phrase left volumes unspoken about previous high-profile royal weddings that began as public spectacle and ended in grief. Prince Edward agreed that he was looking for something more low-key, but admitted that he would be deeply unpopular.

Flashing another warm

glance at her fiance, Miss Rhys-Jones added: "I think getting married is a very personal thing, and naturally there is going to be more interest in us than, obviously, with other

people, but it is a personal matter and it is a family occasion."

Asked how she felt about

joining the Royal Family, she

agreed that it was "slightly

nerve-racking in many ways,

but I am ready for it now and I am fully aware of the responsibilities and commitments".

She looked confident enough

to tackle anything that her

strange new life might throw

at her. She also confirmed that she would keep a foot in the outside world by continuing with her job.

Would her background in

public relations help her to

cope? Yes, she said: she was perhaps slightly better geared up than others to second-guess what might happen.

And what of a family? The couple laughed, pleading the excuse of one step at a time.

They confirmed that both sets of parents were delighted at the news. Prince Edward denied that they had ever lived together, and Miss Rhys-Jones denied that she had ever issued any ultimatums on the matter of marriage. What about the ring? "It's a funny thing on Sophie's ring finger, actually. Diamonds are a girl's best friend, so I'm told."

"Oh, you're my best friend."

"Oh, right, sorry."

The key question could no longer be delayed. What about the failures of previous royal marriages? "Oh, someone had to bring that out, didn't they," said the Prince, hiding any irritation behind a laugh. He dodged the question of extra pressure on him as a result of other family misfortunes. "I think if anybody's going to get married, I hope they think that they are going to get it right."

Prince Edward had one final observation. "We are the very best of friends, and that's essential. It also helps that we happen to love each other as well very much, and it's great."

The encounter was over. Hand in hand, the couple walked back inside the palace. Within minutes the kiss was flooding television channels around the world and any hopes they might have harboured of a quiet family wedding vanished with the mist.

Reluctant suitors, page 22

Ring continues 150-year link forged by Victoria

By MICHAEL HARVEY

THE diamond engagement ring sparkling on Sophie Rhys-Jones's finger yesterday fittingly combined tradition and modern fashion.

The Prince slipped it on her finger for the first time when they met at Buckingham Palace yesterday after he flew back from an appointment in Glasgow.

They had commissioned the triple-diamond ring, estimated to cost up to £50,000, from Asprey and Garrard in London's Bond Street. The jeweller, which has royal connections stretching back 150 years, also made engagement rings for the Duchess of York and Diana, Princess of Wales.

The three diamonds — a 2.05-carat round stone surrounded by two smaller heart-shaped gems — are surrounded by 18-carat white gold. Gem experts in Hatton Garden said heart-shaped stones were among the most difficult to produce.

Asprey and Garrard was formed last September by the merger of two of the most exclusive jewellery houses, Gar-

rad and Garrard, which had been Crown Jeweller since 1843, and Queen Victoria spent the equivalent of £3 million there during her reign.

The Princess of Wales's more traditional sapphire and diamond engagement ring was made by Garrard and cost about £20,000. It was an oval sapphire amid a cluster of 14 diamonds set in white gold. After her death, it was passed to her family.

The Duchess of York's engagement ring, costing

£25,000, was also made by Garrard. An oval ruby was surrounded by ten drop diamonds in a star-shaped cluster, mounted in 18-carat white and yellow gold.

The Queen's engagement ring was platinum and set with 11 diamonds. It took two men just over a week to make. The central stone was three carats, about the size of a woman's little finger nail. It came from a ring owned by the Duke of Edinburgh's mother. The Princess Royal was given a ring with a large sapphire between two diamonds by her first husband, Mark Phillips, in 1973. For her second marriage in 1992 to Timothy Laurence, engagement and wedding rings were made by one of the groom's family friends, Carol Darby, of Winchester. The engagement ring was again sapphire and diamond.

Royal wedding rings are traditionally made of Welsh gold. Those of the Queen, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Princess of Wales and the Duchess of York were made from a nugget of gold mined in Wales in 1923.

Choice of chapel is break with tradition

By JOANNA BALE

BY CHOOSING St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle for their wedding, Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones are expressing their desire for a more personal celebration.

Perhaps mindful that his elder brothers' and sister's ill-fated marriages took place amid the state pomp and grandeur of St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, Prince Edward appears to be opting for something a little more low-key.

He is, however, following in the footsteps of many of his more distant ancestors by choosing St George's, which has been the setting for royal weddings, christenings and funerals for over 500 years.

The last royal wedding there was the simple but stylish marriage of Lady Helen Windsor and Tim Taylor in 1992. Before then, it had not been used for a royal match since Princess Alice of Albany married Prince Alexander of Teck in 1904.

One royal Edward who enjoyed a long and fruitful marriage after a wedding at the chapel was Edward VII, who chose it for his wedding to

Princess Alexandra of Denmark in 1863. The marriage lasted 47 years, until his death in 1910, and produced five children. However, his liaisons with Lillie Langtry, Lady Brooke and Alice Keppel are well documented.

Its position within Windsor Castle, considered to be the Royal Family's home, will have added attractions for the Prince, who grew up there and is known to be very fond of it.

The building's construction began in 1475 during the reign of Edward IV and it was unaf-

fected by the great fire at the castle in 1992. The architecture of the chapel, which can hold up to 1,000 people, is one of the finest examples of Perpendicular Gothic in the country.

The chapel, a royal peculiar under the Queen's jurisdiction rather than an archbishopric, is the spiritual home of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, the oldest monarchical order of chivalry, founded by Edward III in 1348. Its all-male choir is drawn from the College of St George, a secular community of priests and laymen.

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The chapel,

Barmaid
who pulls
pints at
the local

Search begins for a spotless dukedom

Untarnished royal titles are in short supply, but the front-runner is Cambridge, reports Alan Hamilton

PRINCE EDWARD is expected to be created a duke on his marriage to Sophie Rhys-Jones. Genealogists believe that the most likely available dukedom is that of Cambridge.

Created by the Stuarts in 1661, the title has an unfortunate history, but unblemished and unoccupied dukedoms are not in plentiful supply.

The first four dukes, all sons of James Duke of York, who became James II, died one after the other in infancy. The future George I was created Duke of Cambridge by Queen Anne in 1706; the title has been vacant since the death in 1904 of its last holder, George Duke of Cambridge, whose equestrian statue graces Whitehall.

George was Commander-in-Chief of the Army and a first cousin of Queen Victoria, neither of which prevented him from having a colourful pri-

vate life. As a guest at Victoria and Albert's wedding in 1840, he met and instantly fell in love with Louisa Fairbrother, an actress five years his senior.

They lived as man and wife,

Louisa being known as Mrs Fitzgeorge, but they did not get around to a proper marriage ceremony until shortly before the birth of their third son.

Even then they had to marry in secret, believing that the Queen would invoke the Royal Marriages Act — which re-

quires the sovereign's permission for her children to marry — to prevent the union.

George was buried along

with his wife in a mausoleum in Kensal Green cemetery, and they now have no male heirs living. Since then there has been only a Marquess of Cambridge, a nephew of the last duke and the brother of Queen Mary, who was given the title

of the available dukedoms, the most unlikely to be be-

stowed on the Queen's third son is that of Clarence, which has an even more unfortunate history than Cambridge. The only Clarence to reach the throne was the duke who became William IV; the last holder, Albert, eldest son of Edward VII, has long been suspected of being the true identity of Jack the Ripper, the notorious killer of London prostitutes.

"Clarence is too closely associated with murky characters, and with drownings in baths of Malmsey, to be bestowed on one of the Queen's children,"

David Williamson, co-editor of *Debrett's Peerage and Baronetage*, said yesterday. "But given present-day trends, it is quite possible that any dukedom bestowed on Edward will only be for his lifetime, rather than a hereditary title."

Prince Edward, of course, would be perfectly entitled to buck all historical precedent and refuse all titles except the one with which he was born. That, however, would leave his bride with the unhelpfully cumbersome title of Her Royal Highness Princess Edward.



Last holder of title: George, Duke of Cambridge.

In 1917 when he surrendered all his German titles at the height of the First World War.

An alternative to Cambridge is that the newly engaged couple become Duke and Duchess of Sussex, a title that has had only one holder, a son of George III who was given it at the end of the 18th century.

George had so many sons that he had to create new titles to satisfy them all.

Of the available dukedoms, the most unlikely to be be-



Louisa Fairbrother, the actress the Duke secretly married after she bore him two sons

Will it be a hit with shoppers?

By ADAM SHERWIN

MAKERS of royal memorabilia are hoping that this marriage will prove as lucrative as that of the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1981.

Bone-china busts of Sophie Rhys-Jones are hastily being planned for the serious collector, while traders are preparing to hawk T-shirts depicting the couple.

More than 2,300 items were available at the time of the Wales' wedding, encouraging the public to part with an estimated £383 million, a record for a royal event.

The wedding of the Duke and Duchess of York has produced few items of lasting value. A commemorative Sarah Ferguson plate will not make one rich. "They are good for Frisbee-throwing, but, sadly, they are virtually unsaleable," said Mark Oliver, royal ceramics expert at the auctioneers Phillips.

Royal Doulton admitted surprise at the engagement announcement: "We don't really have enough time if the wedding is in a couple of months, but we hope we can produce what people want."

Artist formerly known as Prince Edward

By MICHAEL HARVEY

INTHE first defining decision of his adult life, Prince Edward made it clear that he wanted to be his own man.

Instead of following his brothers into a career in the Armed Forces, he dramatically quit the Royal Marines after less than a year. The jeering criticism from the public is something that he will never forget.

The Queen's youngest son turned instead to the theatre and later founded his own television production company, Ardent Productions. He insists on being called plain Edward Windsor, but admits that, despite a promise not to trade on his royal connections, much of Ardent's initial success was based on programmes about his family's past. He now believes that being a prince is a hindrance in his profession because he has proved himself a hundred times over.

The same can be said of his private life. The Prince, 34, is painfully aware of the monarchy's recently turbulent history, particularly the collapses of his brothers' marriages. More than anything, perhaps, the desire to avoid making similar mistakes in his relationship with Sophie Rhys-Jones has shaped the past five years of his life.

He has chosen St George's Chapel for his wedding because it was "somewhat slightly different", and he and his fiancée want no repeat of the spectacular marriages of the Prince of Wales at St Paul's Cathedral and the Duke of York at Westminster Abbey.

Miss Rhys-Jones was the Prince's first relationship of any substance. He had stepped out with a number of girls — including Ulrika Jonsson and the actress Ruthie Henshall — in his theatre days, and the media glare was intense. With Sophie, he was desperate to protect the blossoming romance.

Soon after it became public, he even took the then extraordinary step of publicly pleading with newspaper editors in an open letter to be left in peace. He has remained touchy on the subject, but yesterday the speculation was over and a markedly more confident and



Prince Edward's television company, Ardent, is based at Bagshot Park in Surrey, where the couple will be.

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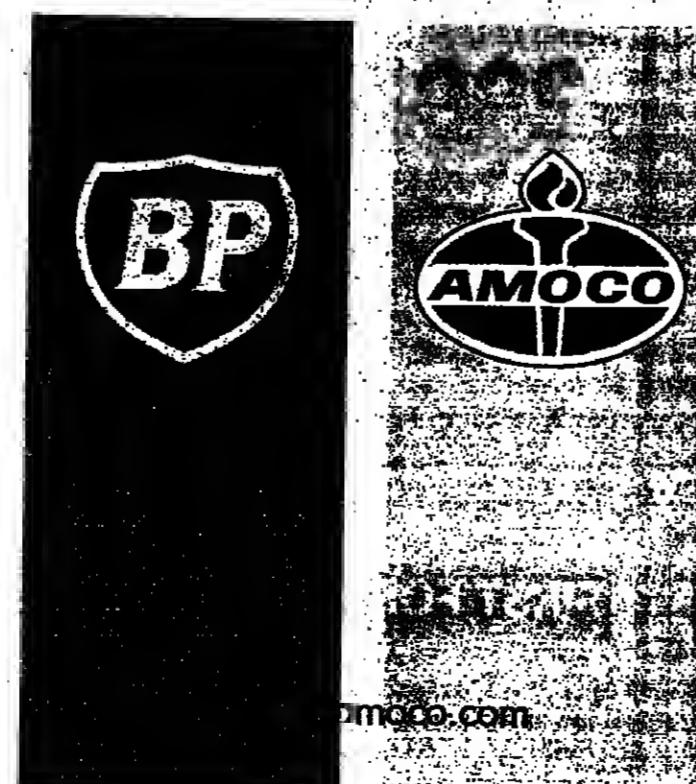
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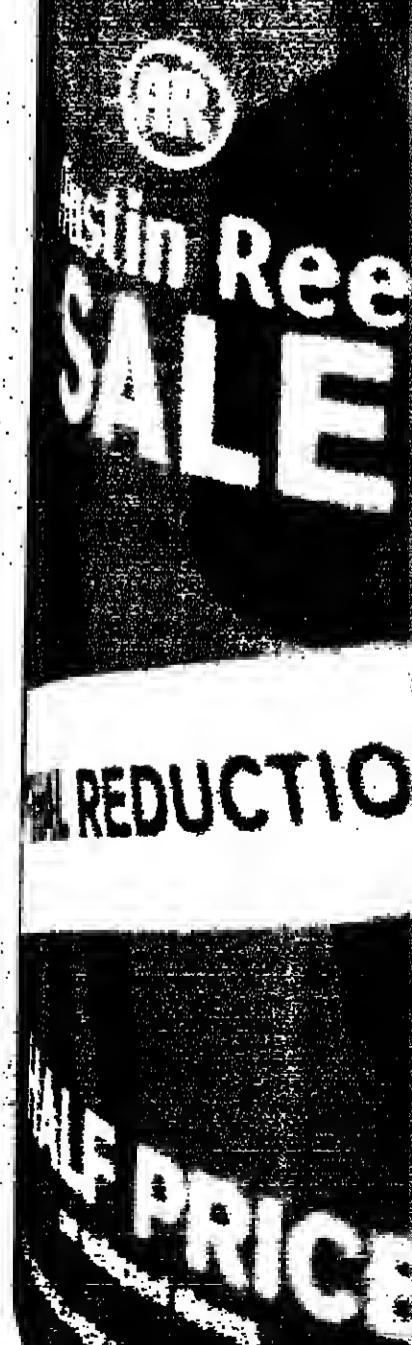
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“I do”



عکس از من را کمبل



Monty saw Africans as 'complete savages'

Secret documents reveal grand imperial design, reports Richard Ford

VISCOUNT Montgomery of Alamein dismissed the African as a complete savage who was incapable of developing the continent himself, according to a secret report he prepared after a tour of 12 states.

He proposed plans to amalgamate British interests in Africa into three federations that would act as a vast reservoir of labour and minerals to ensure the survival of the UK, according to papers released at the Public Record Office in Kew, southwest London.

Montgomery, then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, warned Clement Attlee's Labour Government in 1948 that, in the event of a showdown between the East and West, "then Africa goes with the West". In a secret report of which only ten copies were prepared, he advocated a grand design for African development and a "master plan" for each British colony.

He recommended the creation of a west African federation based on Nigeria and Ghana, a central African federation based on Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia, and an east African federation based on Kenya and Uganda.

He wrote that there would be immense difficulties, but that there had been similar problems during the invasion of Normandy in 1944. "There will be many people in the UK who will oppose such a plan on



Montgomery and Rhodes, whose courage he admired

the grounds that the African will suffer in the process. There is no reason whatever why he should suffer, and in any case he is a complete savage and is quite incapable of developing the country himself.

"We must advance, courageously, as did Cecil Rhodes," he said. "The plain truth is that these lands must be developed in order that the British may survive."

Montgomery said the colonies contained minerals, raw materials, labour, and food in almost unlimited quantities.

His report said that "brains and go-getters" were needed to help in the development of Africa. It said there was a marked lack of men of ability in the African colonies. His re-

port of a visit to French Morocco, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Belgian Congo, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt in the autumn of 1947 is highly critical of the lifestyle for white settlers. He wrote: "Life flows on in a very easy tempo; conditions are easy, with no restrictions on food or other necessities of life. There are masses of servants and no-one does anything for him or her self. This is bad for character and is particularly harmful to young people and children."

Montgomery advised the Secretary of State for the Colonies that there was no time to lose and that those who opposed him should be "eliminated ruthlessly" and others who

engaged in "belly-aching" should be "stamped-on".

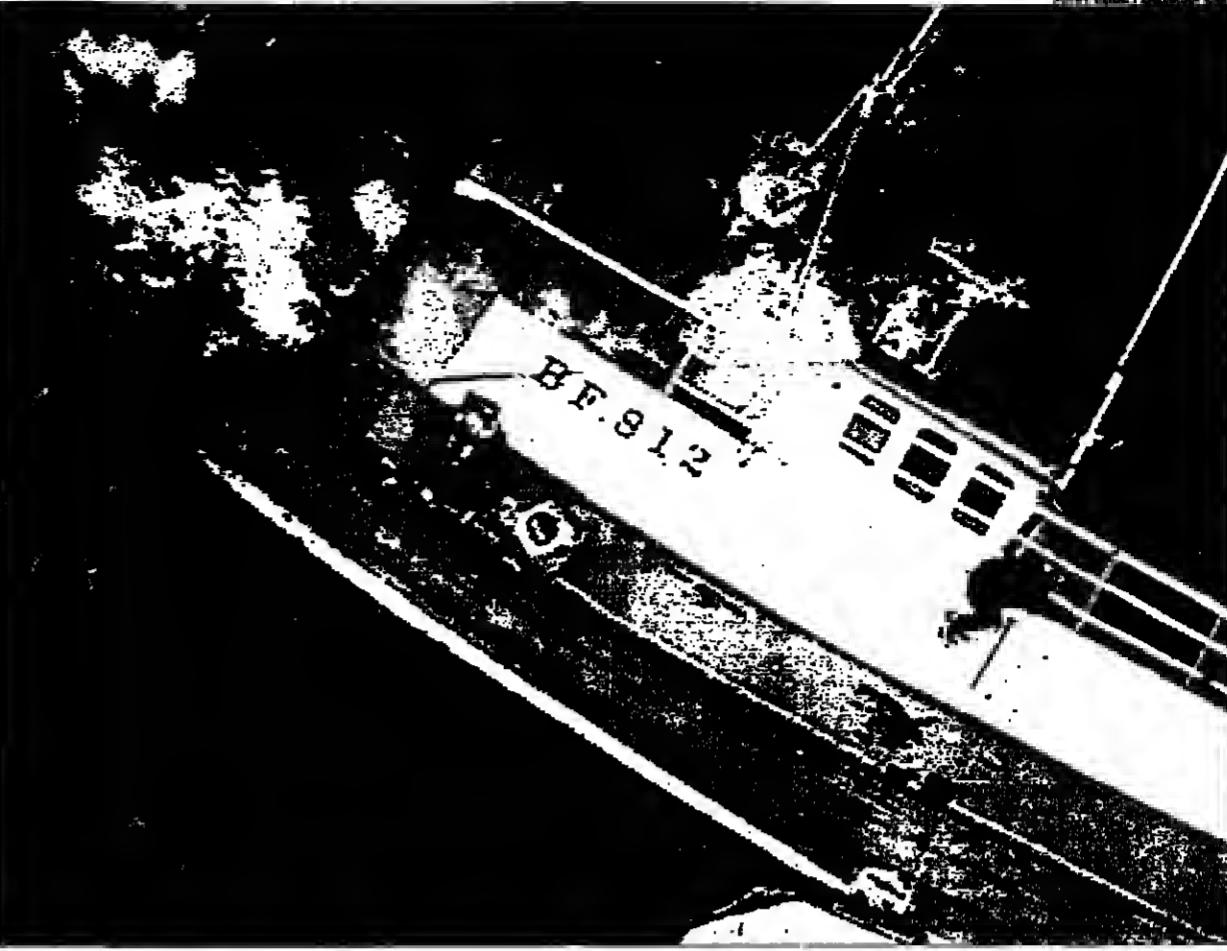
He was scathing about Emperor Haile Selassie, the ruler of Ethiopia. "The emperor is a fine title, but he is a pathetic figure, living an uncertain existence in an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust."

He said the country was in a state of medieval feudalism, and described an "Alice in Wonderland" situation, in which the emperor had built a house for him to stay in during his visit. He attended a picnic at which marques were furnished with silver bowls, Persian rugs and masses of fruit. "Hollywood could hardly conjure up a more incredible scene," Montgomery added that on the way to the picnic he had motored through countryside where half-naked people were tending their flocks "as in the days of Abraham".

But the report was received coolly by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, who said Montgomery had greatly exaggerated the minerals on the continent. He said Africa was not an "undiscovered El Dorado".

"It is a poor continent which can only be developed at great expense of money and effort."

After receiving the Secretary of State's objections, Montgomery wrote: "It is obvious we disagree fundamentally on the whole subject. Time will show which of us is right."



The winchman and crew scrambled onto the hull before being lifted to the safety of the RAF helicopter

Crew escape sinking boat

TWO fishermen and an RAF helicopter winchman were airlifted from the North Sea yesterday when a fishing boat rolled over as they fought to keep it afloat.

The Banff-registered *Aurora* sent a mayday at 9am after taking on water 60 miles northeast of Fraserburgh. A rescue helicopter was scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth, and Flight Sergeant Trev Preece was lowered to the vessel.

He helped the two crew to try to pump out the engine room but then realized the boat was about to roll over. He and

the fishermen scrambled onto its side. Sergeant Preece, 41, said: "The helicopter saw this happen and came over immediately. When the strops came down I got one round one of the crew, but the other fell just as he grabbed hold of the second strop."

"The winch operator lifted them just enough to get them off the side of the boat and into the water. I swam over and managed to get the strop on the man properly." The three were treated for shock and the effects of swallowing diesel.

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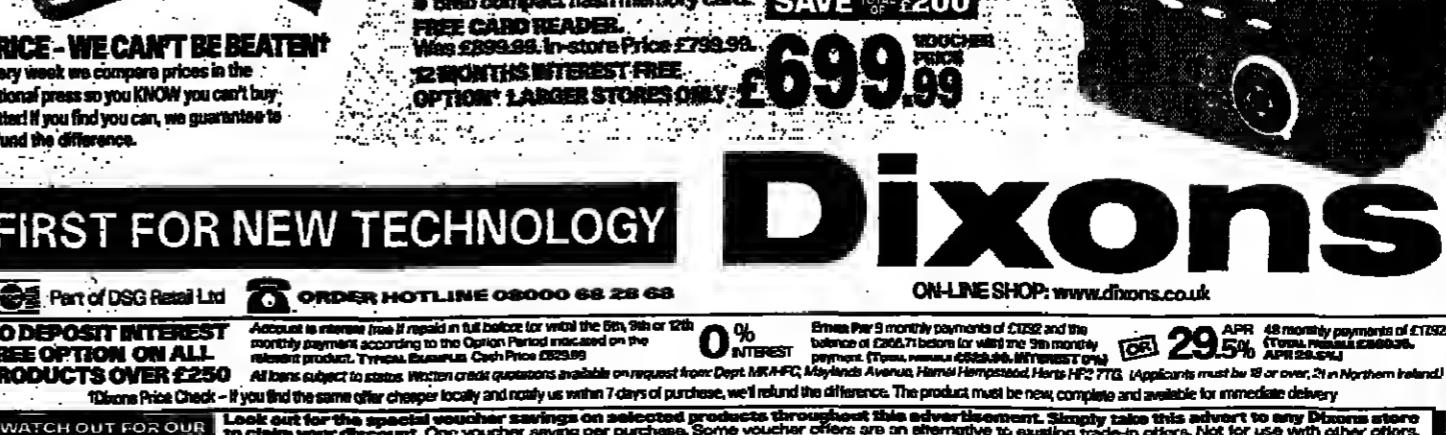
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Baby killers 'hidden by cot death cloak'

Ian Murray reports on the child health expert who says the awkward truth is being evaded

BABY killers are able to go undetected because coroners are too ready to accept that a child has been a victim of cot death, according to an expert on infant deaths.

Professor Sir Roy Meadow examined 81 cases of children killed by parents and found that 49 of the babies had originally been certified as having died of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). A further 29 were certified with another cause of natural death.

Sir Roy, head of the department of paediatric and child health at St James's University Hospital, Leeds, has often been asked by police to help him investigate infanticides and he has based his study on notes taken of cases over 18 years. He found that, in 24 cases, more than one baby in a family had died and, in one case, four babies died before the mother came under suspicion.

Writing in *Archives of Childhood*, published today, Sir Roy argues that "SIDS has been used, at times, as a pathophysiological diagnosis to evade awkward truths". He suggests that it would be better if official use of the term were discontinued. "Nobody doubts that there

are many different causes of death for children categorised as SIDS and yet we continue to use the term as a diagnostic category and to discuss it as a single disease entity.

"We should be honest and admit that we do not know and, above all, we should be angry and intent on preventing so many young children dying suddenly and unexpectedly early in life."

He says that, as the number of cot deaths has fallen to below 400 a year because of better preventive measures, it should now be possible to organise a multidisciplinary confidential inquiry into every unexpected child death.

"It is a national scandal," he says. "If one out of every thousand 21-year-olds died suddenly and unexpectedly without an identifiable cause, there would be a national outcry."

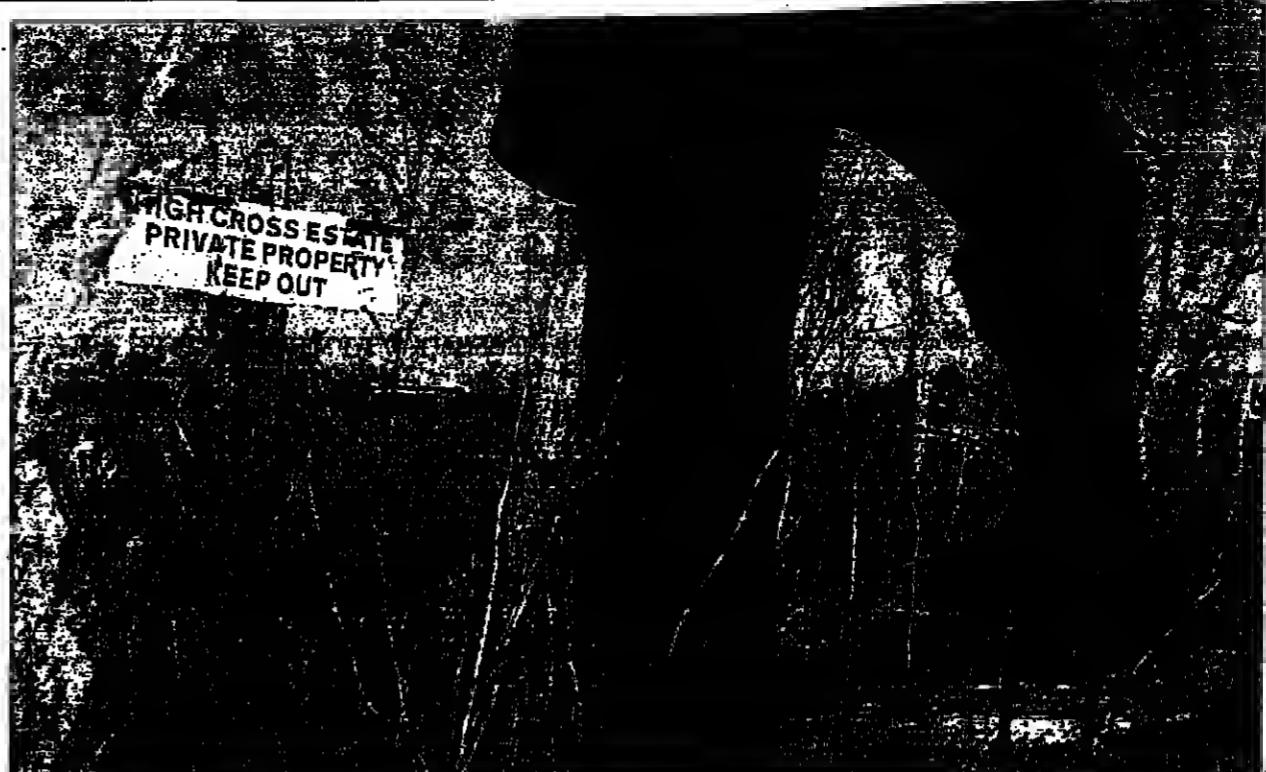
His notes of the 81 cases make it clear that there is a pattern of baby killing and that

another four occasions the baby died on the anniversary of a previous sibling's death.

Sir Roy's case notes showed that most of the children had been born to mothers who had not had previous five babies. For the 14 parents who had an older child living, 12 of those children were considered to have been abused.

Most of the babies had been killed by their mothers, who had smothered or choked them. Most of the women smoked and belonged to disadvantaged families with no regular income. Half of them had a history of fantasising disorder, such as Munchausen's syndrome.

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths said that it had always acknowledged that some unnatural deaths were being erroneously recorded as cot deaths, but it was unfair to exacerbate parents' pain by automatically raising suspicion. The foundation agreed with the idea of comprehensive investigation into all sudden infant deaths, and would prefer the term SIDS to be used consistently and correctly rather than abandoned.



A rambler sets out on footpath No 9, defying the landowner Nicholas Van Hoogstraten, who was thought to be in France

One small step down path of protest

A MUDDY and overgrown footpath that has been blocked by a millionaire landowner was the scene of a very civilised protest yesterday (Adrian Lee writes).

With orders from organisations not to make a nuisance of themselves and to mind the brambles, ramblers con-

verged on the home of Nicholas Van Hoogstraten to walk the disputed route.

Its owner's descriptions of ramblers as "riff raff" and "the great unwashed" have made him a symbol of the hundreds of unresolved disputes between property owners and walkers throughout

Britain. The protesters admit that the route in question, footpath No 9 at Framfield, East Sussex, is rather unremarkable, but the 50 ramblers who congregated there were determined to assert their right to walk it.

Mr Van Hoogstraten, 51, first blocked the path nine years ago, and later built an ugly, corrugated metal barn across it. Jack Dunn, 82, the local footpath secretary for Framfield parish, said that there should be an understood protest against such obstruction, but, "there is no need for us to resort to violence — or even bad language".

Shortly after 11am, the ramblers, various dogs and six policemen set off in sunshine

"We will do this twice a year to make our point."

Ministers still keen to avoid legislation

By MICHAEL HORNBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE Government is still hoping to secure greater public access to privately owned countryside without resort to compulsory route work, that is terrific work."

Alan Meale, a junior Environment Minister, said yesterday: "We are striving to get a series of voluntary agreements and arrangements with the land-owning community. We believe that is the best course we should follow."

His remarks come after the recent disclosure in *The Times* that the Department of the Environment was disappointed with the result of consultations with landowners and was again considering legislation to force landowners to allow the right to roam.

Despite the lack of progress, Mr Meale told 450 farmers and food industry representatives at the annual Oxford Farming Conference that the Government was still hoping that legislation would not be necessary.

His comments were warmly welcomed by the Country Landowners' Association. Ian MacNicol, the president, said: "This is the first time I have heard a minister spell out so

clearly the Government's preference for a voluntary approach. If we can make the voluntary route work, that is terrific work."

But Mr Meale, who said that details of the access scheme would be unveiled soon, also told landowners that they could expect tough legal action if they would not agree to make sufficient amounts of land accessible to the public. "We have made it clear that if we do not get the degree of public access we require, then we will have to pursue primary legislation in this parliament. We hope we will not arrive at that situation.

"I have to say that if we go down the path of primary legislation, it would be very firm and wide-ranging. Let there be no doubt whatsoever about that." He said the Government wanted to ensure that new access was permanent and "provides certainty for users and land managers alike".

The Ramblers' Association, which has been campaigning for a legal right to roam, believes that landowners will only concede adequate access if compelled to do so by law.

Body clock has its own alarm bell

By NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A HORMONAL wake-up call may partly explain why some people can control the time they wake without the need for an alarm clock.

Researchers have discovered that levels of a natural body hormone rise sharply in the hour before someone expects to come round. Scientists at Lübeck University in Germany tested volunteers' patterns over three nights. Some nights they were told they were to be woken at 9am and on other nights at 6am. The researchers also "surprised" the 15 volunteers by waking them earlier than expected.

During the experiments, reported in *Nature*, the researchers measured levels of the hormones adrenocorticotropin and cortisol released from the adrenal and pituitary glands. Concentrations circulating in the bloodstream both rose steadily during sleep. But in the hour before someone expected to be woken, levels of adrenocorticotropin soared. In volunteers woken up before the anticipated time, levels of this hormone were about a third less.

Visual aid to quitting cigarettes

By CAROL MIDDLETON
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

SMOKERS who have made a new year's resolution to quit are being invited to try a new weapon in their battle against addiction.

STOP! is a glossy magazine being backed by the Government and promises to help people to kick the habit by the power of entertainment. Spurred by the success of diet magazines, the Health Education Authority conducted research in 1996 and found that 35 per cent of Britain's 15 million smokers wanted to read a magazine about giving up.

At £1.75, less than a packet of ten cigarettes, it features articles by celebrities such as Anne Robinson and the actress Dervla Kirwan in which they recount their own experiences of giving up smoking. There are also features about products and techniques, quizzes and humorous stories from around the world about smoking. The magazine will also test new products.

Nicola Willis, the Editor, said that it worked on the principle that if people were entertained they were more likely to remember the information and remain motivated by it.

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Intensive care units 'refuse 1 in 5 patients'

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

INTENSIVE care units in Britain are fuller and have sicker people in them than anywhere else in the world, according to Paul Lawler, president of the Intensive Care Society.

Dr Lawler, who runs a 12-bed unit at South Cleveland Hospital in Middlesbrough, said that patients were having to be moved around a great deal to find an empty bed. He had admitted two patients over the weekend and now had no beds available to read-

mit one of his own patients who needed care.

"Intensive care units are refusing around 20 per cent of the patients being referred to them," he said. "In some cases this is because they are not ill enough. In a very small number of cases it is because they are so ill there is no point in putting them in an intensive care bed since they are not going to survive."

If there was no room for a seriously ill patient in one of the

unit's beds, the options were to leave them in the general ward or put them into a holding bed in an operating theatre recovery room until a bed became available. Some patients were kept in recovery rooms for up to 24 hours.

Moving a patient to another hospital was only undertaken as a last resort. "It means that you have to send the patient off in the ambulance with a doctor and a nurse. That means you deplete a hospital, which already hasn't got the facilities to look after the patient of two members of staff who are needed to look after other patients. You don't move unless you are at the end of your tether and the fact that so much of it is going on at the moment shows how desperate the situation is."

"Intensive care in this country is in crisis at the moment. Nobody can deny that because of all the transfers that are going on."

He said that, because last winter was so mild, managers should have been prepared for the rush of extra patients this year. "The problem with intensive care beds was predictable, but unfortunately too little was done in time. The lead-time to open a bed is up to three months. Extra facilities should have been put in last October, when the first evidence of a looming problem appeared."

Julian Bion, an anaesthetist

Flu victims told to stop ringing 999

By TIM JONES

FLU sufferers were urged yesterday to stay away from surgeries and to stop calling the emergency services.

John Chisholm, chairman of the GPs' committee of the British Medical Association, said that, in nearly all cases, doctors were unable to help.

Dr Chisholm said that the crisis facing hospitals was exacerbated by a small number of people who dialled 999 when all they had was flu. "There is nothing a doctor can do to cure uncomplicated flu and people should help themselves."

He said that sufferers should

take plenty of rest, drink lots of fluid and use paracetamol or aspirin to lower their body temperatures. He urged the public, particularly the elderly, to have flu injections and reduce the risk of infection.

Criticising those who rang 999, he said: "Naturally, hospitals err on the side of caution and sometimes keep a flu sufferer brought by ambulance in overnight for observation, priving a more seriously ill patient from having a bed." Other sufferers were walking into accident and emergency departments and increasing waiting times.

Emergency team searches for beds around the clock

By ALEX O'CONNELL

STAFF at the Emergency Bed Service work frenetically around the clock to match seriously ill patients with the country's few available intensive care beds.

A team of bleary-eyed admissions officers in an airless southeast London office make constant calls to hospitals to find places where they will beneath giant maps of the country and laminated boards dis-

playing continually updated hospital vacancy figures, the room looks more like a war cabinet bunker than the headquarters for a national hospital bed search. None of the admissions staff wish to be identified for fear of receiving direct pleas from desperate patients.

One officer, who has worked at the unit for two years, said: "In the last week, it has been particularly difficult getting spaces for intensive care patients. The calls have been

coming in thick and fast over the last couple of days with lots of people with chest infections and pneumonia needing acute and intensive care."

Another said that it would not be unusual for a London patient to travel to Manchester for an intensive care bed.

Graham Hayter, the general manager of the EBS, said: "There are transfers taking place which a lot of hospitals would say were outside

their area. With intensive care we are worried that there are only a few beds available to us."

"We are keeping a close watch and are effectively saying to hospitals when they ring us that their chances of getting a bed for a patient that they need to transfer are less good than at other times."

The EBS predates the NHS and was set up in 1938 by the King's Fund. The 34 operational staff assist with acute emergency referral

into London hospitals and operate the National Intensive Care Service, which has been in place for two years. The EBS is funded by London health authorities, and the NIC also receives money from the Health Department.

"It is important to remember that an intensive care space is not just about the bed, it is about organising the right level of care for that patient," Mr Hayter said.

Permanent intensive care units

were a British invention, but now we fall behind every developed country except for Greece in providing the money to run them. The average British hospital can only spare 3 per cent of its income on intensive care, while German hospitals spend 9 per cent and American hospitals at least 10 per cent.

There currently are about 1400 such beds in Britain, about 300 of which are dedicated to paediatric care.



Patient is flown 150 miles to nearest free bed

By ALEX O'CONNELL

AN ELDERLY man with breathing problems had to be flown 150 miles to hospital by an RAF helicopter because there was no room in intensive care units near his home.

The man was referred to a medical assessment unit at Hemel Hempstead Hospital, Hertfordshire, last on Saturday by his GP. He was complaining of a chest infection and the doctors decided that he needed to be put on a ventilator. They then discovered that the nearest available bed was at the Musgrove Park General Hospital in Taunton, Somerset.

A Sea King helicopter was sent from its Suffolk base and the patient was picked up for his 90-minute ride to Taunton.

A spokesman at the Hemel Hempstead Hospital said: "Doctors agreed that the best course of action was to transfer the patient to the nearest available intensive care bed in Taunton. Financial considerations were secondary to that." The patient was now in a comfortable position.

The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Ambulance Service said that the bill for the transfer could run to £5,000. Steve Jones, the spokesman, confirmed that the service had taken patients in his patch as far as Gloucester, Warwick and Lincoln in the past few weeks.

Another hospital, the Southampton General, faced the prospect this week of sending one patient to Yorkshire, 250 miles away, when they had only one intensive care bed left. Belinda Atkinson, its critical care director, said: "We fortunately did not have to transfer anyone. If it was ever in the best interest of the patient we would move them. But we would always try to look nearer home."

The night before, two patients had to be removed from the general adult intensive care unit of the Southampton General to make way for more urgent cases. One of the patients was moved to Bournemouth, the other endured an ambulance journey of about 125 miles to a hospital in Torbay, Devon.

Leading article, page 23

LAURA ASHLEY

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GEOGRAPHERS' CONFERENCE

Bus lanes alone 'will not shift Mondeo man'

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

THE Government's plan to shift people out of cars and on to public transport is unlikely to succeed without much greater investment in the geographers' conference at Leicester University was told yesterday.

Richard Knowles, of Salford University, said that partnerships between bus companies and local authorities to make bus travel more attractive — a cornerstone of the Government's policy — had produced very little evidence of a significant change in habits.

Of 16 such schemes, known as Quality Partnerships, only three had shown clear evidence that "Mondeo Man" would give up his car. Dr Knowles said. Bus use had increased in most cases by only a little and no studies had been done to discover where the extra passengers had come from.

"They could be people who used to walk, or they could be people who always travelled by bus but who are now making more journeys," he said. "We simply don't know."

An exception was a scheme in Ipswich. Super Route 66, where a section of road has

been segregated for buses, which run between raised kerbs. A study has shown a 42 per cent increase in use, a quarter of the extra passengers coming from cars.

Most Quality Partnerships were too small and unambitious, Dr Knowles told the Royal Geographical Society — Institute of British Geographers' conference. They could involve bus lanes, bus priority at traffic lights, new buses, more frequent services, better bus shelters and information systems, or park-and-ride facilities. But the average length of new bus lanes introduced per partnership was 210 metres, too short to make any significant difference to the speed of bus travel.

"These token-gesture bus lanes have very little real effect," he said. "Comprehensive upgrades are needed, including route segregation, as in Ipswich, but these are much more expensive." The Ipswich scheme, involving a single route into the city, cost £2.3 million, while a typical Quality Partnership scheme can attract significant numbers of car users or reverse the long decline in bus ridership.

Another successful scheme,



Professor Rosemary Crompton, who says childcare is still "the bottom line" for career women in the professions

Women bankers pay family price

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

WOMEN who climb the management ladder in banking pay for their success by having fewer children, unlike their counterparts in the equally male-dominated profession of medicine.

The difference, according to Professor Rosemary Crompton, of the University of Leicester, lies in the control the women can exert over their lives. Doctors can plan their careers around child-bearing, whereas managers have to tailor theirs to

suit their employers. She found the same pattern in five countries — Britain, France, Norway, the Czech Republic and Russia — studied as part of a survey funded by the Economic and Social Science Research Council. She told the conference that the results indicated that the key question for career women was the same as it had always been: who will look after the children? It was unnecessary to resort to arguments about the "gender nature" of particular jobs to explain why women did not do them.

The numbers of women in both medi-

cine and banking management are rising. For the study, 15 women doctors and 15 women in banking, all aged between 30 and 50, were interviewed in each of the five countries. In Britain, only half the bankers had started a family and only three had more than one child. All but one of the doctors was a mother and most had more than one child.

Professor Crompton said: "There have been a lot of claims recently that men are responsible for holding women back. I am not saying that it is not a valid point, but childcare is the bottom line."

Rampant grass dulls beauty of moorland

By OUR SCIENCE EDITOR

THE mildest grass in Britain — so dull that even sheep dislike it — is ousting heather from Exmoor and large areas of Wales, the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales.

Purple moor grass grows to knee height but quickly loses its leaves and then resembles dry straw. The result is white-coloured moors, with a faint purple streak in late summer.

No one is certain why *Molinia caerulea* is spreading, but neither livestock nor environmentalists are pleased. It is not very palatable for sheep or cattle, except in early spring, and tends to lead to an impoverished flora, with less heather and sphagnum moss.

It is "the damp moorland equivalent of bracken", Professor Frank Chambers of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, told the conference.

Studies by Professor Chambers and a colleague, Dmtri Mauquoy, found that *Molinia* had been present for a long time, but was not as dominant in the past. Explanations for its rise include change from cattle to sheep-rearing and climate change. Professor Chambers believes that nitrate enrichment, largely the result of pollution, is mainly to blame.

It is unclear how the purple invader can be stopped. Herbicides may help, or we could learn to love it. "Unfortunately, it is a very boring grass," Professor Chambers said.

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Rail firm surveys are condemned as useless

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

RAIL companies were criticised yesterday for carrying out surveys that are "misleading" and "close to useless".

Britain's 25 train firms have been forced to conduct surveys every six months to gauge passenger opinion on the quality of service.

A report by *Which?* magazine claims that operators posed questions about relatively trivial aspects of rail travel, but failed to question passengers about more important issues, such as train frequency.

The authors of the report criticise the train companies for failing to have a set of core questions that are consistent across the rail industry.

It also complains that some of the questions asked in the surveys are misleading. For example, Connex South Eastern, which runs services in Kent, asks passengers to rate its performance "for minimising delays" on a scale of one to ten.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, has already demanded a shake-up of the way that train operators conduct surveys, calling for questions to be vetted more closely by John O'Brien, the Rail Franchising Director.

He wants results of surveys to be more reliable and to lead to financial penalties for operators who fail to meet their targets in the same way that firms are penalised for running late trains or for cancelling services.

The report says that too many rail firms fail to ask questions about issues rated most important by passengers, such as overcrowding and train frequency. It says that, of 21 companies that published survey results last year, only nine asked about train frequency, 13 about overcrowding and eight about in-

formation given on delayed and cancelled trains. Four firms did not produce survey results because they were among the last to be privatised.

Even train companies owned by the same rail group ask questions about differing aspects, ranging from standards of catering, the audibility of platform announcements, cleanliness of trains and even the noise of trains.

The Railway Forum, the rail industry's umbrella organisation, conceded that some of the criticisms in the report were well-founded. A spokesman said that it was taking steps to improve services after decades of underinvestment.

Helen Parker, editor of *Which?*, said: "The rail companies' current passenger surveys are close to useless. They should be the responsibility of regulators, not the companies."

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PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY: executive failings clumsy doctors humour in uniform

Stress test shows up dark side of the boss

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

PSYCHOLOGISTS have developed a test that companies can use to discover if their senior managers have a hidden 'dark side'.

Executives taking the 20-minute test are asked to give True/False or Yes/No answers to 168 simple questions, such as: Do you feel that you are ambitious? Are you confident taking in front of a group of people? Do you feel that you are witty and entertaining?

Testers claim not only to be able to identify a manager's strength from the results, but also to predict whether these good points might ultimately lead to their downfall under stress. A person who is self-confident in normal condi-

tions may become arrogant under stress, and overestimate their capabilities. Somebody who is normally shrewd and a good judge of character may become distrustful and paranoid. A cautious person may be reluctant to take risks, while somebody who is diligent and obsessed with orderliness may become compulsive and obsessed with neatness.

Geoff Trickey, a psychologist with the Kent-based Psychological Consultancy Ltd, which has introduced the test to Britain from America, told the British Psychological Society, meeting in Blackpool, that unlike most conventional recruitment tests, which aim to demonstrate how people perform under normal conditions, the new test is designed to predict how they will act in conditions of stress.

He said: "It is designed to expose individuals who are most likely to flip, lose control or exhibit other types of counter-productive behaviour at times of stress that may make them impossible to work with."

The test, devised by the American management expert Bob Hogan, is particularly dif-

Testing trio: Emma Greig, left, Geoff Trickey and Gillian Hyde say the American-devised test for senior managers is virtually cheat-proof

ficult to cheat at because the questions encourage people to highlight their strengths. To catch out any potential fraudsters, a "validity scale" is included that comprises a series of questions that 99 per cent of the general population could be expected to answer in the same way. It includes questions such as: "I have never unknowingly told a lie - true or false?" Anybody who answered "True" to such a ques-

tion would be placed under suspicion.

Mr Trickey said, although he had not subjected Tony Blair to the test, he believed the Prime Minister would emerge as a vivacious/dramatic character type. "He wants to be the centre of attention all the time, but there is a high chance that he could become dramatic and grab any chance to put on an emotional display of himself. People like

this are not remotely interesting in others as people, but are interested in using others as an audience. Once they have got people listening to them, what they are actually saying is all superficial."

President Clinton would probably be of the same type as Mr Blair, Mr Trickey said. He suggested that Peter Mandelson, the former Trade and Industry Secretary, would rate as charming/manipulative. "It

does not matter if you are manipulative as long as you are able to be charming too. But when the charm goes under stress, then people no longer trust you and they won't follow you any more."

Mr Trickey and his colleagues, Gillian Hyde and Emma Greig, told the conference that the purpose of the test was not to persuade companies to recruit only bland people. It could, however, be

useful in identifying a need for training or for raising the self-awareness. For those unable to afford the time or cost of the formal test, Mr Trickey suggested a simpler alternative.

"You get very similar results from watching how people behave when they drive their car. You may find yourself swearing at elderly people, although you wouldn't dare speak to them like that if you bumped into them in a lift."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gulf man's cancer was 'natural'

A coroner has rejected a claim by the family of a former Intelligence Corps sergeant that radiation from satellite communications equipment used during the Gulf War caused the rare cancer that killed him. The rapid sarcoma on the forehead of Andrew Ross, 33, of Kirkheaton, West Yorkshire, was diagnosed two weeks before his death in April 1997. Roger Whitaker, the coroner, investigated the dangers of radiation and the possibility of exposure to materials such as Agent Orange, but recorded a verdict of natural death.

Ben test negative

The family of Ben Needham, who vanished on the island of Kos in 1991 aged 21 months, have been told that a look-alike boy spotted in Greece is not their son. DNA tests on a strand of hair grabbed by a tourist proved negative.

Threat to Tube

Fresh industrial action on London Underground moved a step closer after the main rail union, the RMT, decided to ballot its members over job security, redundancies and changes to employment conditions.

Bosnia pilot dies

An army pilot injured when a helicopter crashed in Bosnia has died, a month after his marriage. Corporal Chris Adis, 26, was among three crew on the Lynx killed when it plunged into a minefield near Gorani Vakuf last month.

In a royal spin

A royal warrant has been awarded to the Prince of Wales's laundry. The Anton Laundry, in Andover, Hampshire, uses environmental-friendly methods. It won the contract for the Prince's home, Highgrove, five years ago.

Binmen win

Four dustmen sacked for collecting too much rubbish won a claim for unfair dismissal. Torbay council in Devon dismissed them for taking commercial as well as domestic waste. A tribunal said they had not done so for financial gain.

Computer reveals the sharpest surgeons

By ALEXANDRA FREAN

A COMPUTER test to identify doctors who are likely to possess the exceptional skill needed for keyhole surgery was unveiled at the conference yesterday.

Keyhole surgery is increasingly popular within the National Health Service because it involves less invasive procedures and shorter recovery times, thus cutting hospital waiting lists. But it demands unusual physical skills: surgeons effectively work by remote control and have to master unusual

hand-eye co-ordination techniques. Some surgeons are simply too clumsy. Assessing trainees has, until now, been extremely fraught, with shortcomings being discovered only after a lot of expensive training or, at worst, after an operation has gone wrong.

The computer-based test, devised by a team led by Professor Dave Barratt of the SME Group in Hull, should help to overcome this problem. In the test trainees have to trace around shapes on a computer screen. Their dexterity, accuracy and speed and spatial ability are all measured. The researchers say

that the test, which does not require experience of keyhole surgery, has proved to be a good predictor of fine motor control and of a person's performance when learning the procedures.

Trainee barristers from ethnic minorities are three times more likely to fail certain tests than whites, according to a study published yesterday.

Chris Dewberry, a lecturer at Birkbeck College, London, said that a study of trainee barristers who took the Bar Vocational Course in 1992-96 showed that performance in the examination

was greatly influenced by the type of university trainees had attended and previous academic performance.

Candidates from ethnic minorities were more likely to have attended a "new" university rather than an older establishment such as Oxford or Cambridge and to have had poorer degree results.

Mr Dewberry told the conference that the findings could explain the relatively poor performance of ethnic minorities and other social groups in the workplace, as well as on training programmes.

Make 'em laugh to make output rise

The secret of increased productivity lies in managers' ability to be more humorous, a psychologist suggested yesterday. In a study of 50 air cadets, humour was identified as the most important quality in a leader, ahead of intelligence. The research was conducted by Howard Taylor, the head of psychology at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University in High Wycombe. He said that it carried serious implications for industry. Productivity could increase if managers used humour when they dealt with workers. "You could call it the humanisation of managers," he said.

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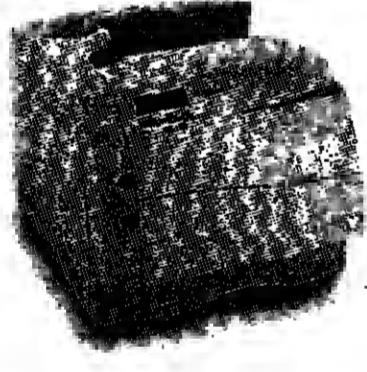
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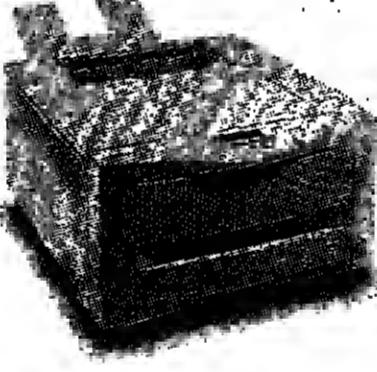
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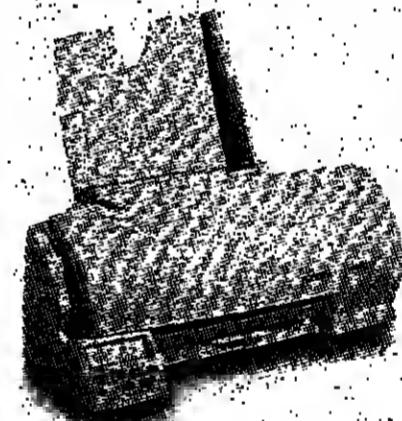
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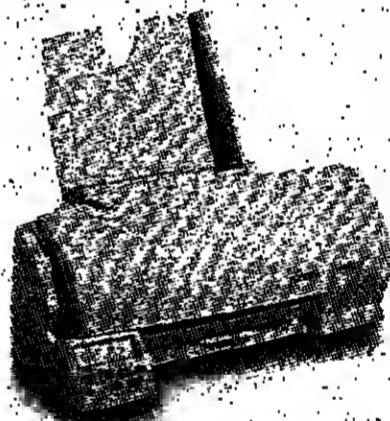


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Yemen stalls Yard's inquiry into kidnap

FOUR Scotland Yard detectives were last night struggling to carry out their investigation into the group behind the kidnapping of 16 western tourists as Yemeni authorities continue to hinder their inquiries.

The Yard's Anti-Terrorist Squad officers and ten FBI agents are being followed everywhere they go in the Yemeni capital. They are forbidden to talk to people about the kidnappings by the al-Jihad group or the series of bomb plots uncovered in Yemen.

The FBI and Yard teams must spend most of the day in their hotel and inform Yemeni's Political Security Organisation of their whereabouts at all times. Local security chiefs fear that the detectives may uncover links with international terrorist groups that are rumoured to have connections to Yemen.

Diplomats were demanding last night that Sanaa keep its original promise to let the investigators question Abu Hassan, the leader of the kidnap gang, whom authorities plan to execute soon.

They also want to see three men arrested in Aden, who allegedly confessed to plotting

Police from Britain and the US are being hampered by the authorities, reports Daniel McGrory in Sanaa

bomb attacks on a series of targets there, which included the British Consulate and an Anglican church.

Yemeni officials say that two of the men, of Pakistani origin, had planned the bombings of five American and British targets from their base in London.

All three claim to be British

PUPILS APPLAUD HOSTAGE SURVIVOR

Sue Mattocks, 43, one of the surviving hostages, was applauded by pupils yesterday on her first day back at Clarendon House Girls' Grammar School in Ramsgate, Kent, where she is head of religious studies. She was one of the first teachers in school for the start of the day and was given permission to take assembly. Jane Bennett, the head teacher, said: "She spoke about her time in the Yemen and how she was glad to be back. She also asked us to remember that there were four families in grief." Becky Gosden, 15, one of pupils, said: "She is one of the best teachers at school. It is great to have her back."



leged bombers, and the links believed to exist between the two groups.

One excuse given by Yemeni authorities for not allowing the police to see Hassan is that the 28-year-old refuses to talk to the Yard.

The strained relations with Whitehall worsened further yesterday after two detectives were expelled from Aden, and there are hints that Britain may impose diplomatic sanctions against Yemen. These could include a ban on visas for travel and a cutback in aid and investment.

Diplomats expressed concern last night for a party of 12 British tourists who had ignored Foreign Office advice and who were travelling along the road on which Hassan staged his ambush. Yemeni authorities withdrew military escorts from touring parties even after the discovery of the bomb plot in Aden on December 22, five days before the kidnap.

There is also growing irritation at how the Yemenis are conducting the hunt for the escaped kidnappers. Security forces did not raid Hassan's home village until five days



An American tourist watches an election rally in Sanaa, where British detectives are largely confined to their hotel

after the botched hostage rescue.

Tribesmen from the village of al-Hajer, 180 kilometres north of Aden, said that known associates of Hassan left their hideouts in the mountains of Shabwa province hours after the surviving hos-

tages were freed. Security sources in Aden said that they had rounded up "a considerable number of suspects", but refused to say how many.

They also claimed to have shut down the al-Jihad's main training camp at Haza, but residents of the remote moun-

tain town said that there had been no raid. Scotland Yard officers in London said that they did not know how long they were prepared to allow their detectives to stay in Yemen.

As efforts continued last night to repair the rift with Sanaa, the Labour MP Keith

Vaz said that a senior Cabinet figure should visit Yemen to resolve the crisis.

Mr Vaz, who was born in Aden, said that he would be willing to go to Sanaa if the Yard officers to conduct their inquiry.

Efforts to uncover truth expose a rift that stems from civil war

A CLEAR rift has opened up between the Yemeni Government and the authorities in Aden over the investigation into the hostage killings.

The decision in Aden to expel two Scotland Yard detectives on Tuesday has exposed tensions between the authorities in the south and the Government in the capital, Sanaa. The confusion appears to reflect the lingering resentment in Aden and south Yemen to the Gov-

ernment in Sanaa, which defeated the breakaway south after a bitter two-month civil war in 1994.

Victor Henderson, the British Ambassador, yesterday had another round of talks with the Yemeni Interior Minister, who promised extensive co-operation.

The Foreign Office believes that the order expelling the two Scot-

land Yard officers from Aden was a mix-up, not reflecting government policy. But if the Aden authorities are defying the Interior Ministry's promise of help, this could make the official investigation into the killings impossible.

Officially the Scotland Yard detectives in Sanaa have been told that they can return to Aden when-

ever they want and interview whomever they wish.

The Foreign Office yesterday dismissed as ridiculous reports that they might not be allowed to interview the suspects because they are Muslims. "In any case, we too have Muslim police," a spokesman said.

A bigger complication comes

with reports that some of the suspects may hold British passports, which would entitle them to a visit and British consular advice. If they also held Yemeni citizenship, however, Britain would have no consular right to see them.

About 2,000 people are believed to hold British passports in Yemen, most of them Yemenis with

dual nationality. The Foreign Office said it was still unclear who the kidnappers were or what were their motives. "They could be connected to outside powers and people such as Osama bin Laden, or this could be purely a local tribal affair," a spokesman said.

Mr Henderson was cordially received yesterday by Yemeni offi-

cials, who still say they are keen for Britain to establish the facts of the case.

The British Embassy is meanwhile denied any change in policy towards Yemen's attempt to join the Commonwealth after diplomatic furore erupted over the killing of the hostages. It issued a statement confirming that Yemen's request had been under review by all members of the Commonwealth since 1997.

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دعاة

US 'used UN arms team to spy on Iraqis'

BY JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK AND MICHAEL BINYON

A FEUD between top United Nations officials and UN weapons inspectors broke into open warfare yesterday when aides to Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, accused the United States of misusing a UN intelligence-gathering system to spy on President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

The allegations, echoing longstanding Baghdad complaints, focused on an electronic eavesdropping operation codenamed "Shake the Tree" and established by the UN Special Commission (Unscocm) in early 1996 to thwart Iraqi efforts to conceal banned weapons of mass destruction.

While Mr Annan was on holiday, unnamed aides were quoted as saying that he had "convincing evidence" that Unscocm helped the Americans to collect intelligence to destabilise the Iraqi regime. The Secretary-General has become aware of the fact that Unscocm directly facilitated the creation of an intelligence col-

lection system for the US in violation of its mandate," one adviser told *The Washington Post*. "The UN cannot bear to an operation to overthrow one of its member states."

The charges appeared to be part of a bureaucratic battle over the future of weapons inspections after last month's US-British airstrikes on Iraq. They sparked a denial by Richard Butler, chief UN weapons inspector, and were discovered by Mr Annan's office. "We not only have no convincing evidence of these allegations, we have no evidence of any kind," said Mr Annan's spokesman.

"Shake the Tree" dates back to a 1996 decision by weapons inspectors to pursue the "concealment mechanism" by which Iraq's security services and elite military units hid components and documents for weapons programmes. UN inspectors set up electronic surveillance to monitor mobile phones and walkie-talkies. The system, originally run from the UN, monitoring

centre in Baghdad, meant that inspectors learn immediately of Iraq's evasion attempts. British and Israeli personnel helped to interpret data.

Scott Ritter, the former UN inspector who ran the "concealment" inspections, told *The Boston Globe* that "Shake the Tree" was run by Unscocm until March 1998. Then, after Mr Annan negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with Saddam, the US pressed Britain and Israel to withdraw support and took over the operation. By last July the system had reportedly been automated so the US could monitor Iraqi communications after inspectors had left the country.

Mr Butler denied relinquishing control of "Shake the Tree" to America, and he rejected charges that Unscocm was helping it to destabilise Iraq.

The 20,000-tonne British aircraft carrier *Invincible* will sail for the Gulf on Saturday to join British and US forces deployed there, the Ministry of Defence said yesterday.



An Iraqi soldier, anticipating further airstrikes, mans an anti-aircraft gun in Basra

Fury at Israeli car clampdown

Jerusalem: Britain and Israel were involved in a diplomatic clash yesterday when Israeli police removed cars owned by Palestinian staff from outside the British consulate-general in east Jerusalem (Christopher Walker writes).

British officials made formal complaints to the Israeli Foreign Ministry. According

to British diplomats, three cars were seized from Palestinians and Israeli Arab staff employed at the consulate-general despite remonstrations from British officials. The Israelis claim the cars will be sold unless their owners pay income tax owed to the Israeli authorities. British officials claimed



Lipkin-Shahak: poll entry

Netanyahu faced with centre party challenge

Jerusalem: Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the former Israeli Chief of Staff, yesterday announced his bid for Prime Minister as head of a new centre party that he said would create a "political revolution" in the Jewish state (Christopher Walker writes). In a

strong challenge to Binyamin Netanyahu, the present Prime Minister, Mr Lipkin-Shahak said his new party would replace the "entrenched and outmoded ideas" of the ruling right-wing Likud Party, and of Labour, which has been in opposition since 1996.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Pilot protest adds to Olympic woes

Athens: A work-to-rule by Olympic Airways pilots demanding regular overtime pay has cast a cloud over the airline's survival (John Carr writes). The management says routes may have to be cut to maintain basic operations. Earlier this week, hundreds of Athens-bound passengers at Heathrow and Orly, Paris, fumed as the work-to-rule added to delays. A London-Athens flight last Sunday overflowed a scheduled stop at Salónica when the pilot refused to fly into overtime. On arrival at Athens, angry passengers who should have disembarked at Salónica, briefly confined the pilot in the cockpit.

19,000 flee rebel clash

Kabze, Burundi: Clashes between rebels and government forces near the Burundian capital have left dozens of people dead and displaced nearly 19,000, officials said. Since fighting intensified early last month, all 10,932 residents of the Mubone commune, and 8,000 residents of the neighbouring Kabezi commune, have fled their homes. (AP)

Tasteless sweetmeats

Tel Aviv: Bags of confectionery containing portraits of Adolf Hitler and Nazi swastikas, right, are on sale in Israel, *Yedioth Ahronot* reported. The Tofta sweets, imported from Turkey, come wrapped in portraits of dictators, including Hitler and Iraq's President Saddam Hussein. David Bissu, the importer, said that he had received complaints about the Hitler pictures from Nazi death camp survivors. (AP)

Genocide films 'lost'

Phnom Penh: More than 1,000 hours of film that could help to frame genocide charges against Khmer Rouge leaders are missing and might have been sold, the head of Cambodia's genocide documentation centre said. The films comprise virtually the entire domestic archive of films made during the 1975-1979 Khmer Rouge regime. (Reuters)

32-year silence broken

Hanoi: Pain during an operation on his abscessed foot led Truong Van Xa, 32, to speak for the first time. Mr Xa, a deaf mute, had had a local anaesthetic, but when the doctor at Binh Dinh Provincial Hospital made an incision, he screamed, adding: "Oh my gosh, it's so painful." His vocabulary has grown since, but his hearing is still impaired. (AP)

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Off-road cars come adrift in US snow

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

AS THE death toll rises in the Midwest's great blizzard, misery has come even to the once-proud owners of gleaming four-wheel drive vehicles. The honest American car tad in years, "all-terrain" vehicles — used mainly as suburban runabouts — have met their first real test of strength with Mother Nature. And they are floundering in snowdrifts by the thousand.

Chicago's worst blizzard in 30 years continued yesterday, with fresh layers falling on the 2ft of snow that has crippled the city since the weekend, despite round-the-clock bulldozing by more than 700 snowploughs. Ninety-one deaths have been blamed on the

storm, and upwardly mobile professionals who thought themselves immune have been humbled by wrecked transmissions and broken axles in cars they thought would take them anywhere.

"We are in crisis mode and a big part of the problem is four-wheel drive owners who don't know what they're doing," a receptionist at the A-1 Towing Service in suburban Chicago said. Sport utility vehicles have flooded the US market over the past five years, generating huge profits for manufacturers and dealers and earning the fury of environmentalists because, as "light trucks", they are not subject to the same emissions standards as

smaller cars. European companies including Mercedes have joined a stampede led by Ford and Chevrolet to equip the family with machines that dwarf more traditional estate cars. They are sold as the perfect way to conquer the wilderness, often in leather-upholstered luxury.

Yet many owners have been left frustrated and out of pocket this week. Often it is the driver that is the problem. "A four-

wheel drive is not a tank, and even a tank can get stuck," Trent Riddle, Editor of a specialist off-road magazine told *The Wall Street Journal*.

Towing companies from Illinois to New York State were being called out by novices buried in snow. Even the mightiest names in the off-road business suffered casualties. One suburban Chicago dealership towed in a Range Rover and two Land Rovers

with transmissions burnt out because drivers kept spinning their wheels.

The blizzard blanketing much of the central United States has brought record temperatures from Detroit to Disney World in Florida. Most storm deaths have been in traffic accidents, but at least a dozen reported have been elderly people collapsing after shovelling snow.

The most poignant victim

was a still-born baby found in a shawl and frozen solid on the steps of a Chicago church.

Sixteen more inches of snow were expected in Buffalo, New York, yesterday — the unofficial snow capital of the United States. Further west, some air passengers have been stranded since New Year's Day because of chaos in the regional air hubs of Chicago and Detroit. For most, driving home has not been an option.



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THE TIMES

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SEE THE BACK PAGE OF SECTION ONE FOR TODAY'S TOKEN
 CHANGING TIMES

Olympics chief hit by gifts scandal

FROM GILES WHITTELL
 IN LOS ANGELES

JUAN Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee and custodian of its good name, has fallen under the cloud of its latest bribery scandal amid claims that he received gifts worth six times the committee's self-imposed maximum.

In 1995, a week before the IOC awarded the 2002 Winter Olympics to Salt Lake City, Señor Samaranch received two Browning guns worth \$1,500 (555), the Utah-based gunmaker has confirmed. Committee members may accept gifts from potential sponsors up to \$150 in value.

The twist in the Salt Lake City scandal involves tiny sums next to the \$400,000 in gifts that IOC members are said to have received in all, but it is the first involving Señor Samaranch directly, and comes less than a month after he vowed to oust any colleague guilty of corruption.

Utah's 30-year-old dream of hosting the winter games is rapidly turning into a nightmare. What had been touted as a \$3 billion bonanza for the state is now the object of four separate corruption inquiries, including one by the FBI. This week Mike Leavitt, Utah's Republican Governor, issued a stinging rebuke to those who backed the Salt Lake City bid and are now accused of funneling perks to IOC members in return for their votes.

The Olympic movement's worst fear is that the Salt Lake City allegations may be exposed as the tip of an iceberg.



Señor de la Guardia:
 father was executed

Castro is target of French lawsuit

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
 IN PARIS

FIDEL CASTRO has joined General Augusto Pinochet of Chile as the target of international legal action after a French lawyer filed a lawsuit in Paris yesterday against the Cuban President, accusing him of crimes against humanity, torture, drug-trafficking and illegal detention.

Serge Lewisch demanded that Señor Castro face prosecution for the 1989 execution by firing squad of a government official, Colonel Antonio de la Guardia, on charges of smuggling drugs to America.

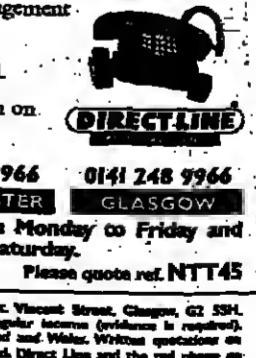
Acting on behalf of De la Guardia's daughter, Leonora M Lewisch claimed that the colonel was one of several scapegoats punished to deflect suspicion from Señor Castro himself during a drugs scandal. M Lewisch also accused President Castro of the arbitrary imprisonment of a French journalist and photographer in the 1970s.

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£100m boost to Aids fight

FROM JILL SHERMAN
IN PRETORIA

A £100 million programme to fight Aids worldwide will be announced by Tony Blair tomorrow. The bulk of the funds destined for South Africa and other African countries.

The Prime Minister will give further details of the three-year British grant when he visits the Nazareth House Orphanage in Cape Town, where most of the children are HIV positive or have Aids.

Officials said the money would go towards the United Nations Aids Programme and to projects to help special victims such as those at Nazareth House. They said that there are now 33.4 million people infected with HIV in the world and that 70 per cent are in Africa.

More than 80 per cent of all deaths from Aids have occurred in Africa, and 10 per cent of existing and new cases now occur in South Africa where the disease has reduced life expectancy by 20 years.

Women between 15 and 25 are one of the highest risk groups, and without effective action soon there could be two million orphans infected with HIV in South Africa.

Blair backs Mbeki as heir apparent

TONY BLAIR hopes to boost the image of Thabo Mbeki among whites and big business during his first tour to South Africa this week.

Mr Mbeki, the anointed successor to Nelson Mandela, has sparked fears among many whites that they face an uncertain future after elections later this year.

Members of Mr Blair's entourage and British diplomats in Pretoria confirmed yesterday that Mr Blair hoped that his appearances alongside Mr Mbeki, and only a courtesy call on Mr Mandela, would "send a clear signal that we are confident about the transition".

"We are here to say to everybody, including the whites and all businessmen, that we think that South Africa is firmly on the right track. The appearance of the British Prime Minister alongside the Deputy President, Mr Mbeki, will send an unmistakable signal to those who might be considering leaving the country," said one official.

Mr Blair echoed these sentiments on the flight from his holiday in the Seychelles to Pretoria, where he landed yesterday at the start of his three-day tour of South Africa.

Britain is the country's largest trading partner, exporting £2.4 billion a year and importing £1.9 billion worth of South African products. In addition, Britain recently announced a £4 billion investment scheme

as part of a deal to sell arms to Pretoria.

There are clearly economic interests at the heart of the British delegation. But Mr Blair and his advisers have also recognised that Mr Mbeki, a small, affable technocrat, has also recently "put the wind up whites" after twice stating that they enjoyed far too much of South Africa's wealth and had done very little to assist in the "transformation" of his country from an apartheid state to democracy.

Thabo is the son of Govan Mbeki, a fellow Robben Island prisoner and close friend of Mr Mandela. Thabo Mbeki went into exile in 1962, shortly before his father was jailed. He studied economics by correspondence with London University, and took an MA at Sussex University in 1966. By 1970 he was receiving military training in the Soviet Union, and was soon serving Oliver Tambo, the then ANC president, as his assistant, a break which swiftly took him on to the ANC's national executive.

Facing elections in May or June, Mr Mbeki's African National Congress has begun to try to turn voters' attention away from a failure to deliver on extravagant promises of social and economic improvements made five years ago to focus on racial issues. His ministers have insisted on racial quotas in national sports teams and pushed Bills through parliament requiring employers to reflect the racial profile of the country in their workforce.

Last year thousands of white professionals, and some of their black colleagues, joined an increasing brain drain of skilled workers leaving South Africa either because of crime, the most often cited reason, or because of a lack of faith in the long-term

goals of the ANC. They left at an average of about 800 a month.

"There is concern that South Africa's whites should not only not be running away, but encouraging foreign investment. That is one of the reasons that Mr Blair has come to South Africa," a member of his staff said. Cementing firm relations between London and Pretoria has been seen as such a high priority that Downing Street openly refers to Mr Mbeki as the "President-in-waiting".

"There is no doubt that the ANC will win the next election, and no doubt that Mr Mbeki as the president of the party and Deputy President of the country, will be elected. It is therefore important for us to pay our respects to Mr Mandela, one of the great figures of the age, before he leaves office, and to cement the relationship with Mr Blair," a British official said.

■ Embassy protest: Tempers flared at a protest by right-wing Afrikaners at the British Embassy in Pretoria yesterday when demonstrators manhandled and insulted a lone British woman who was carrying a Union flag to show her support for Mr Blair's visit. She was uninjured. The demonstrators were demanding an apology from Britain for pain and suffering during the Anglo-Boer war of 1899 to 1902. (AFP)

Leading article, page 23

NET LINKS

www.inca.co.za/ — South African independent online
www.sanc.org.za/sasnet.html — South African Internet Resources, many useful links including business, government and newspapers.
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Cherie Blair is greeted by a child as she and Tony Blair arrived in South Africa yesterday

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UN staff flee rebel battle for heart of Freetown

Insurgents set capital ablaze, report Sam Kiley and Our Foreign Staff

PANIC gripped Sierra Leone's capital yesterday as rebels entered the city killing civilians suspected of being government supporters and bombarding Nigerian-led west African peacekeeping troops defending President Kabba.

The entire United Nations expatriate staff in Sierra Leone was reported last night to be at the airport awaiting evacuation to the Guinean capital, Conakry. Several government ministers were also present at Lungi airport, some 12 miles from Freetown, but said they did not intend to leave.

The rebels captured the State House, the symbolic seat of government. They also burned down the Nigerian High Commission, the city's main police station, and the special branch headquarters. One unconfirmed report said prisoners, including scores of rebels, had been freed from the city's Pademba Road and New England prisons.

Sierra Leonean soldiers and forces of the Nigerian-led intervention force, Econog, that had been fighting the rebels were nowhere to be seen, witnesses said. The Government warned people to stay indoors. "Anybody found in the street from now on will be considered to be a rebel and shot," said Julius Spencer, Information Minister.

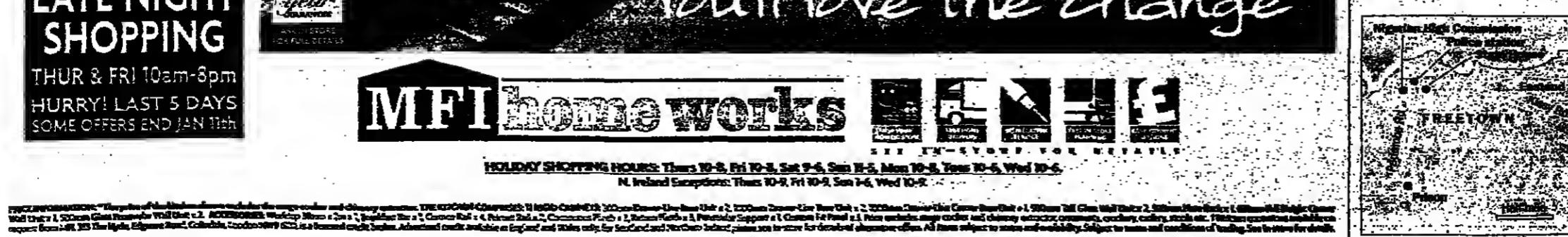
Gun battles and artillery volleys rang out through the city's abandoned streets. Reinforcements and additional supplies were being dispatched to Freetown from Nigeria, a Nigerian military official said on condition of anonymity.

Earlier in the day, thousands of people fled to the centre of Freetown after a two-hour battle on the outskirts of the city. The civilians, fleeing on foot and in vehicles, retreated after the onset of firing from an industrial area about six miles from Freetown.

The rebel force, which has been accused of widespread atrocities, including the murder and torture of countless villagers, as well as cannibalism, launched a renewed offensive in December. It has swept through several towns in the east and north of the country since then.

A United Nations official in

Freetown said the rebels were "truly monstrous". "They are now forcing large numbers of able-bodied men and women into their own ranks after brief training," he said. "There is real panic on the streets though I think that Econog will be able to beat them off."



The mother of all splitting headaches

Is your head throbbing on one side only? Is it made worse by every movement, by light, and does any noise make you want to crawl away and disappear? Do you lose your appetite, feel sick or even vomit? If you have this sort of pain, you are not alone in your misery — you have migraine.

One in ten adults in the UK suffers from migraine, and its cost to industry is immense. Half of all sufferers have to take time off with each attack: 30 per cent leave their office or factory to retire to bed. Only 20 per cent continue with their normal activities.

It is not only work that suffers. Some 30 per cent of people with migraine limit their social life for fear of an attack. The Prime Minister and the Home Secretary can take heart: pundits may decry the conflict between family holiday arrangements and the school term but, compared with the problems caused to children by migraine, these few days of absenteeism are as nothing.

Migraine usually starts in childhood or adolescence. In children, boys and girls are equally likely to suffer, but after puberty it is more than twice as common in women — and women sufferers have more frequent attacks. The average duration of an untreated attack is 24 hours, but for some unlucky people it may last for two or three days.

Migraine attacks are classified according to whether or not they are preceded by an aura: a visual disturbance which may take the form of flashing lights or blurring of the visual field.



Dr Thomas Stuttaford
reports on
migraine; help
for dyslexia;
choking; flu
and strokes;
and personal
stereos and
hearing loss

The first measure to be taken in treatment is to avoid the triggers that may induce migraine. The nature of these triggers is determined genetically, but other factors dictate how easily an attack is brought on. Stress, and either too much or too little sleep, together with fatty meals, tea, coffee and alcohol, are the most common triggers.

In women, hormone levels can influence attacks. Menstrual migraine is a common

problem and is defined as a migraine headache which only occurs from two days before a period to three days after it.

Dr Charles Broomhead, one of a group of GPs, nurses and pharmacists known as MIPCA — Migraine in Primary Care Advisers Group — has studied the effect of exercise on migraine. A dramatic header in the goalmouth may make wonderful television, but it can also induce migraine in the soccer player. A football weighs 400g and when travelling at 30 miles an hour, it can distort the arteries at the base of the brain so that they go into spasm, causing a migraine. Any other sports in which the head is knocked, such as rugby and boxing, can also lead to migraine but so, surprisingly, can swimming, running and weight-training. Many skiers get violent migraines as a result of altitude.

If, despite avoiding trigger factors, the patient is having more than two attacks a month, long-term preventive medication is recommended. The choice includes beta-blockers and 5-HT-agonists such as Sanomigran (pizotifen) and Deseril (methysergide), but other preventive drugs are being introduced.

Many older remedies are still effective once an attack has started, but treatment has been revolutionised by the introduction of triptans. The first triptan was Imitran (sumatriptan), but there are now three others available which have certain advantages: Maxalt 10 (rizatriptan); Zomig (zolmitriptan) and Naratriptan (nátriptan). Imitran, however, can be taken by mouth, intranasally or by suppository.



Pure agony: the intense pain of migraine can be triggered by stress, tea, coffee, alcohol or a bump on the head.

Avoid choking to death

In which the pit of a patient's abdomen is subjected to sharp pressure from the doctor's hands clasped over it. At the second attempt, the lollipop was ejected like a cork.

"What would have happened if the manoeuvre

hadn't worked?" asks Dr Peter Standing, one of the other doctors in the practice. He suggests that all doctors should become familiar with the procedure of emergency laryngotomy, which involves making a hole in a patient's

neck below the obstruction so that a tube may be inserted and breathing made possible.

The first step is to become familiar with the anatomy of the neck. The object is to locate a small gap between the thyroid cartilage — the Adam's apple — and the cricoid cartilage, about 3cm lower. A gauge 12 intravenous cannula can then be attached to a syringe and inserted at 45 degrees. Lo and behold, a lollipop-swallower can breathe again.

One place where it is now safe to choke is the Bury surgery. Doctors there have been practising with a pig's larynx, very like the human larynx, bought at the local butcher's under the eagle eye of their ear, nose and throat specialist.

Stresses of flu pose stroke risk

A CHARACTERISTIC of flu this year has been the nausea and vomiting that accompanies it. I recently met an old friend in whom this nearly led to disaster. She had had high blood pressure for many years but had treated it rather dismissively. However, after she had been sick 15-20 times in the day, her blood pressure must have risen to the point where it uncovered a weakness in her cerebral circulation. One of the blood vessels in her brain gave way and she collapsed unconscious.

The important lesson of this case is for the need to bring blood pressure down as low as possible so that ageing blood vessels are not pounded to destruction. The good news is that if a stroke occurs in someone who is hypertensive, it can be treated — their blood pressure can be lowered, although thereafter it will be a question of pills to keep it at a safe level, for what should be a long life.

Further good news from the *British Medical Journal* is that even if the bleed, the small stroke, hadn't been induced by flu but was as a result of a congenital weakness in the arterial tree, a dramatic treatment would be needed. About 5 per cent of the population have little unruptured aneurysms — worn, bulging points in the central arteries — but a study has shown that if they are very small, the rate of rupture is less than 0.05 per cent per year.

Conversely, 15.7 per cent of those who bravely ventured into surgery to deal with a small aneurysm had serious problems. If an aneurysm is larger than 10mm or situated at the junction of the internal carotid and posterior communicating artery, the risk of leaving it is greater.

than a six-month period. The connection between the late Princess and the French recruits was that the recruits who shared her fondness for a personal stereo were those most likely to suffer from hearing loss. Careful examination of the background of the recruits who had been appreciably deafened by their headsets showed that those who suffered had also had repeated ear infections during infancy and childhood. Personal stereo use did not influence the hearing of those who did not have otitis media when they were children.

The research by the military doctors from Clamart, in France is important since it underlines the necessity of treating ear infections adequately in childhood. The child may not grow up to be a fan of pop music but he or she may be subjected to other persistent, heavy noise. Avoiding deafness may depend on an infection having been treated seriously some 30 years earlier.

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Will Hillary have the last laugh?

President Clinton's Senate trial begins today. Will Hillary stick by him, or forge a political career alone? Here, Gail Sheehy reveals the childhood that made the First Lady a formidable fighter but left her addicted to an emotionally unavailable man

THE FIGHTER
When Hillary was four her mother gave her licence to fight a girl who kept punching her: "There is no room in this house for cowards," Dorothy Rodham said. "The next time she hits you, I want you to hit her back."

This became the model for Hillary's operational style. "If I was going to war, I'd want her covering my rear. She's never going to run from a fight," says Congressman Jim McDermott, a Seattle psychiatrist who has insight into Hillary. "I would be more wary of challenging her than another member of Congress," he admitted.

"I wanted my children to be able to keep their equilibrium," Dorothy Rodham told me, explaining how she used a carpenter's level as a visual tool for instruction. She showed Hillary and her brothers the level with the bubble showing dead centre.

"Imagine having this carpenter's level inside you," she told them. "You try to keep that bubble in the centre. Sometimes it will go way here," she said, tipping the instrument to show how the bubble could drift, "and you have to bring it back."

It took a Hillary to raise a president. "Hillary taught him how to fight," says Carolyn Yeldell Staley, Bill's boyhood next-door neighbour from Hot Springs. Hillary tried to keep Bill on schedule. "I have to kick his ass every morning," she once told Susan McDougal, according to the late Jim McDougal, the Clintons' Whitewater guru. Hillary toughened him up.

HILLARY'S MOTHER
Hillary carefully censors what she says about Bill — even with her own mother. Dorothy Rodham does not grant interviews. She lives in a condominium in Little Rock co-owned by Hillary.

I was able recently to engage her in a conversation. We don't get down and have those mother-daughter discus-

sions about how she relates to her husband, her daughter or anything else as far as her personal life is concerned. We don't talk about deeply personal things."

Does Hillary feel pain very deeply? "Of course she does — she is a very sensitive person," Mrs Rodham said, her voice tightening. "But she is able not to over-emotionalise it. She doesn't go into one of these horribly overwrought kinds of tizzies. That's one thing I never did either."

A TOUGH FATHER
Hugh Rodham prided himself on having trained young naval recruits for combat during the Second World War and he used his old methods in raising his children. Hillary tellingly describes him as "a self-sufficient, tough-minded small businessman".

"When I brought home straight As from junior high," Hillary once wrote, "my father's only comment was 'Well Hillary, that must be an easy school you go to!'. No matter how well she did, her father was always 'raising the bar'."

FOR THE LOVE OF BILL
When, in 1992, I asked the candidate's wife to name the most ecstatic experience of her twenties, she laughed and replied: "Falling in love with Bill Clinton... He wasn't afraid of me."

He tapped into a part of Hillary that no one else ever had, says Betsy Wright, Clinton's Chief of Staff when he was the Governor of Arkansas. "Everyone else saw her as a terribly serious woman, very intense. He saw the side of her that liked spontaneity and humour. He discovered her natural laugh. It's fabulous — there's nothing held back. The public never sees that side of her. When she's laughing, that's when she's free."

Judith Hope, the chairwoman of the New York State Democratic Party, organised a big tent event at the home of the actor-activists Alex Baldwin and Kim Basinger in Amagansett. Bill Clinton turned to Hope after his wife had made a speech and said with a chuckle: "They really love her in New York." Maybe she should consider running for office in New York."

The crowd tensed as Hillary began to introduce the President. She spoke of his deep commitment. He appeared to be moved. Then she turned to welcome my husband, President Bill Clinton". Clinton leapt up and grabbed her, not just a hug and air kiss, but a prolonged clinch: Hillary swooned. They fell into each other's arms.

At that moment Judith Hope experienced an epiphany: "He just keeps seducing this woman over and over again. This kind of chemistry can't be faked. She can't resist him." Hillary is addicted to Bill. "That man would lie down and kill himself before he would let her leave him," insists Betsy Wright. "There have been other temptations but Hillary is the love of his life."

"He's intimate only when he's seducing," says Dick Morris, a former Clinton strategist. But one-on-one, in terms of a real intimate love relationship — such as a marriage — he backs away. He withdraws. A formerly close aide who was by Clinton's side in both public and private situations says: "He is emotionally unavailable. He lives on campaign junk love and casual sex — where no long-term commitment is required."



Bill discovered her genuine laugh: it's fabulous — there's nothing held back. The public never sees that side of her. When she's laughing that's when she's free

HER POLITICAL FUTURE

"Perhaps a myth had developed in their marriage that Bill Clinton was utterly detached from the practicalities of life and that she was good at it. But aside from his philanthropy, he's a long-time ally, almost every problem the guy got into — Whitewater, Travaglio, Filegate, the early appointments, how she made money, cattle futures — all that was Hillary. She is awful at this stuff. She is terrible. Almost the worst I have ever seen."

When Bill Clinton is influenced by his political tone-deaf wife, he falls flat.

"Handling White House operations wasn't what Hillary cared to do," concedes a top aide. Hillary's uncompromising style — an asset in the courtroom — proved contrary to the craft of capital politics, where compromise is a necessity. She had an ear for how to sell her ideas. Betsy Wright dismisses any idea that Hillary would want an elective or appointive post.

"I don't think that she wants to be in Washington or in the thick of politics. I think she wants a life. Washington has been a cruel personal experience. It has taken a terrible personal toll."

HILLARY'S NEWS

CENSORSHIP
One reason why Hillary is able to maintain her momentum is that she imposes a PG rating on the news digests that

her staff prepare for her — no sex, no late-night talk-show gags, no fact about the scandal that might distress or distract her. Hillary is not a news junkie like her husband. She would rather review reports on health maintenance organisations than wallow in tabloid or television accounts of her problems. Betsy Wright told me jokingly: "Hillary is probably the only person in America you could tell a cigar joke to and she wouldn't get it."

HILLARY TELLS THE TRUTH

On the American television programme *Today* late last January, speaking with a certainty that few married people could muster, Hillary declared that she and her husband "know everything there is to know about each other". Nobody could have predicted the snowball effect it would set off — except Bill Clinton. To keep from telling Hillary the full and awful truth, he lied to everyone else. By the end of 1998 he was still lying about his lies.

CHELSEA THE LINCHPIN

Betsy Wright recalls Bill taking the time to practise the piano with Chelsea while impatient aides waited. The Clintons' resident babysitter in the mid-1980s, Melinda Martin, says: "Whenever Hillary was there, she always sat with Chelsea while she had dinner." The Clintons rarely went

out together in those years of strain on their high-wire marriage.

Bill once called Dick Morris to report: "I don't think we are going to make it." Bill Hillary, according to Betsy Wright, never gave her husband an out. Chelsea was their reason to hang on.

TELLING CHELSEA

For years Chelsea had been the President's Saturday night "date" for dinner on the many weekends when Hillary was out of town. Who now would play hearts with him in the wee small hours when insomnia would not let go its grip on his unquiet mind? Who now would love him unconditionally? Chelsea had one foot across the threshold of independence when Bill Clinton took up with Monica Lewinsky, who was six years older than his daughter. In the autumn of 1997 Chelsea would leave him for Stanford.

With her departure, the Clintons would lose their most elemental personal bond, their one emotional oasis. Hillary, too, felt the void. A few years before Chelsea went off to college, Hillary even floated the idea of adopting another child. She was mocked — too old.

Hillary told a Miami banquet audience that autumn: "I'm looking for ways to divert myself from the empty nest. And I'll take just about any invitation to dinner that I can get."

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Fay Weldon chooses her favourite book

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN was the most influential for me when young. They are not fairytales but morality tales. Indeed, they seem distinctly unsuitable for children. *The Little Mermaid*, for instance, is an exercise in masochism. Such stories as *The Snow Queen* are brilliantly surreal — they cut to the quick and you end up wishing that they were true. It is all the more tragic because they are not.

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BREAKOUT

CHELSEA AGAINST HER FATHER

Their beloved daughter was called home three weeks following her return to Stanford University after spending Christmas with her parents. Who was going to tell her, and what?

In effect, Hillary told her husband there was no room in this White House for cowards.

You take your daughter to Camp David and explain it yourself. I'm going to Davos. Chelsea, some say, was so devastated by the revelation that her father had lied to her and her mother that she fought with him.

Her friend the Rev Jesse Jackson called the White House to see if he could help. Chelsea asked him to come. The night before the President was due to testify before Starr's grand jury, Jackson told me that he calmed Chelsea and Hillary with Bible stories.

Later he said: "What's different here is that Starr is able to play God with government funding."

Hillary, Jackson says, let out a whooping laugh. "Where did you get that line?" "It has a trademark," he said. "If you use it, give me credit."

CLINTON'S MID-LIFE CRISIS

Three personal markers in Clinton's life occurred during the two years he carried on his affair with Monica.

The two most adoring women in his life "abandoned him" in ways he could not prevent. His mother, Virginia Kelley, died of cancer a year after his inaugural celebration.

But even more agonising was the long, slow slipping-out of his arms of his daughter. The third was when he fell down the stairs at a golf pro's house; overnight, he took on the accoutrements of decay and dependence: wheelchair, brace, cane.

Clinton had always believed that he would die prematurely; he was haunted by the image of Bill Blythe's fatal crash before his own birth, the car carrying the young man they said was his father careering off the road, out of control.

Cheap shots on the grouse moors

A new weapon is aimed at the lairds, says Magnus Linklater

It was a piquant occasion, one for the memoirs: the landowning class had been summoned to Bute House, principal residence of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Scotland, to learn its fate. Its representatives sat meekly on gilt chairs, in the Georgian splendour of the first-floor drawing-room. The press had softened them up in advance with some ferocious headlines: "Rogue lairds to have their land sold off", "Feudal rights to be abolished", "Dewar set to break up big estates".

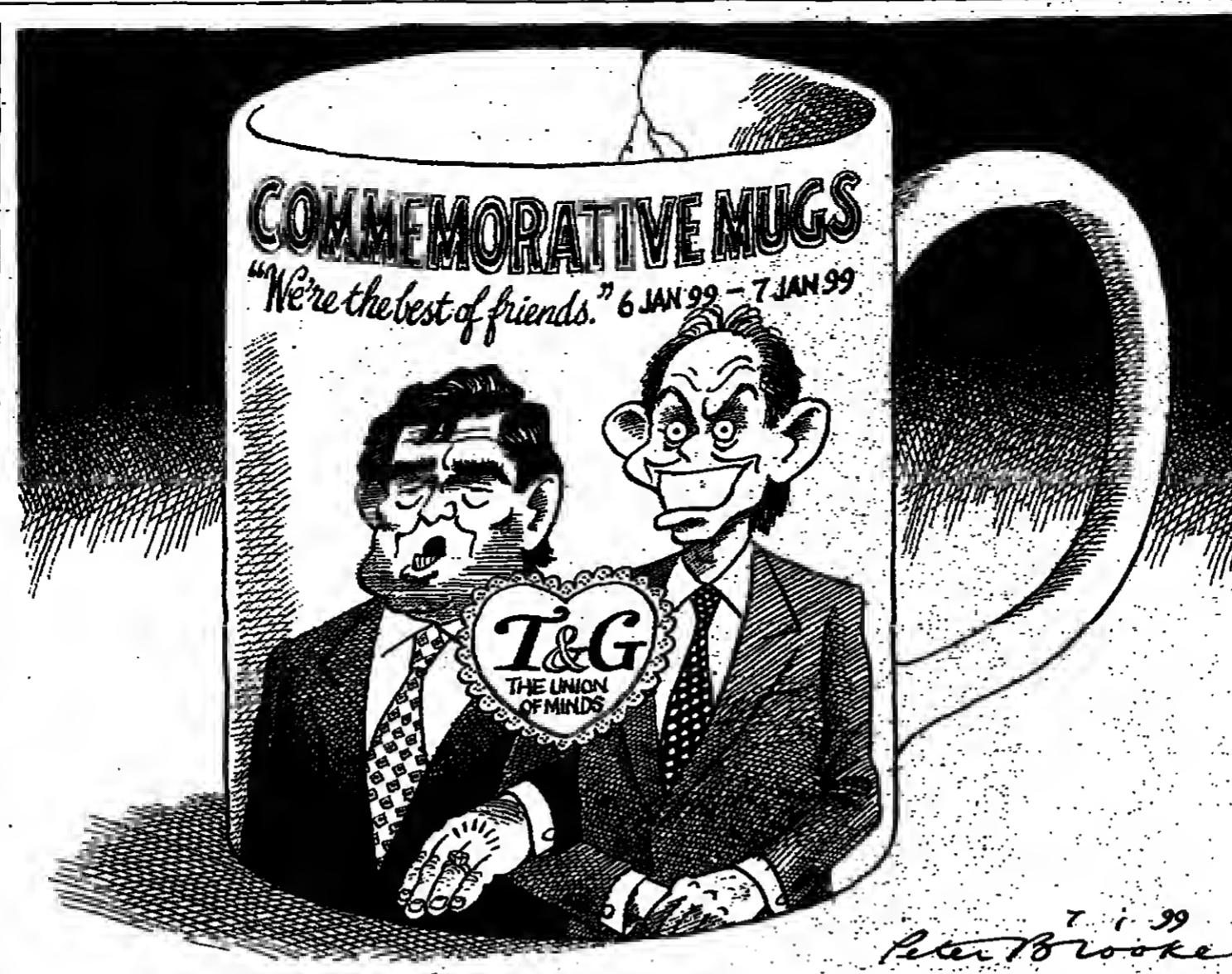
Among those attending were the Duke of Buccleuch and his son, the Earl of Dalkeith, with their 260,000 acres in the Borders. Lord Ramsay, with his estates in Angus, John Grant of Rothiemurcus, with 24,000 acres of the Highlands, and members of the Scottish Landowners' Federation. The Government had warned them that it intended to tackle abuses which stretched back over the years, which had prevented local communities from controlling their own destinies, which allowed a handful of rich families to own half the Highlands, and gave absentee landlords the right to trade great swaths of the most beautiful territory in the world for their own gratification.

Land reform, The very phrase has a 19th-century ring to it. Now, however, said Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, it was at the top of the agenda — one of the first measures to be introduced when a Scottish parliament meets this year. On Tuesday, as he outlined his proposals to an anxious audience, the whiff of socialism drifted across the room. A future Government would intervene to hold up private sales of land if they were judged against "the public interest"; local communities would be given a right to buy whenever land changed hands; they would be helped, with lottery funds, to put together bids; the Government, not the market, would determine the value of the land being sold; compulsory purchase orders would be used by ministers to buy land and transfer it to the community if local people had not been given the chance to bid for it.

It is hard to explain to a non-Scot why such apparently drastic action should be deemed necessary. On the surface it is a blatant interference in the market, a form of government regulation that would provoke outrage if applied to any other aspect of the private sector. It could drive land prices down and scare off prospective owners. And why should the sale of a family estate not be conducted with the same freedom as selling the family silver?

It is not as if the abuses themselves are earth-shattering. There was the Eigg controversy, when that beautiful Hebridean island was bought over the heads of the inhabitants by an obscure German artist; there is the

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Low interest currency

The euro has left the people cold

They need not worry before 2002

financial news. There were no signs in the shops and the bars about euro prices and shopkeepers were as willing to take payment in pounds sterling as they always have been. Upon my return to Britain I found the absence of euro-triumphalism even more striking. Why, then, have the celebrations among the British advocates of EMU been so subdued?

Two short-term reasons are obvious enough. The EMU cause in Britain has suffered a thoroughly dismal Christmas, despite the financial headlines about investors' "enthusiasm" for the euro (which, if true were told, was largely a matter of catching up with the euphoria on Wall Street in the days after Christ-

mas, when European markets were mostly closed).

First there was the fall of Peter Mandelson, easily the Government's most important euro-promoter. With Mr Mandelson out of the Cabinet, there should be an attrition of stories, especially in the *Financial Times*, about "senior ministers" who believe that membership of EMU is "inevitable" and are pressing Tony Blair to start an early referendum campaign. Then, on Tuesday, there was *The Guardian/ICM* poll, which showed that British voters would currently vote against EMU membership by a margin of 52 to 39 per cent, with a surprisingly small 19 per cent saying they were undecided. Of course this kind of polling says little about how people would actually vote at a different time and after a long referendum campaign. But the fact that the anti-euro majority is bigger today than it was at the time of the general election must surely come as a disappointment for EMU lobbyists. They have been working zealously to convince the public that Britain will become a banana republic and that British industries will be reduced to rubble if the pound remains outside the euro-zone — yet these warnings seem to have had no impact.

Perhaps this will happen in time. But the horrible reality which the pro-EMU lobbyists have conveniently ignored until this week, but cannot ignore any longer, is that the British and continental political timetables are again moving unhelpfully out of sync. British proponents of EMU have always assumed that the launch of the single currency would create a sense of reality and inevitability that would sweep all before them. What they forgot was that bankers and businessmen do not always share the same sense of reality as ordinary voters. The launch of the euro may have been the biggest upheaval in years for investment managers, corporate financiers and foreign-exchange dealers. But for the vast majority of voters it has been a non-event. In fact, until euro notes and coins are actually issued the euro will remain a disembodied abstraction — nothing more than a blip on a City dealers' screen.

The really bad news for the British EMU lobby is that the physical

creation of the euro, which will not begin until January 2002, will probably come too late to have any positive psychological impact on a general election that is likely to be held in the summer of 2001. Until 2002, British tourists will still have to change their money and perform arithmetic acrobatics not only when they leave Britain, but also when they cross borders between France, Italy and Spain. They will find this particularly galling after being led to believe by the euro lobbyists in Britain that the euro has turned Europe into a single currency promised land.

To make matters worse, British voters will continue to read about clashes between European finance ministers and tensions between central bankers, at a time when the economic cycles in Germany and Britain are again diverging in a potentially unhelpful way. In the two years between now and the next general election, Britain should be pulling out of its present economic slowdown, the pound may be falling slightly, to the benefit of British industry, and interest rates are likely to remain stable or continue to fall. In much of Europe, meanwhile, the current strength of the euro is likely to cause an economic slowdown and a reduction in exports, which will not reach their nadir until some time in 1999.

It is quite possible, therefore, that in the period leading up to the general election, Europe will suffer some political tensions or economic disappointments, while Britain's performance proves no worse than expected, or even slightly improves. So, British people will readily attribute this divergence to the abstract economic experiment of creating the euro. If, on the other hand, Europe prospers, they will find it difficult to see why this should be attributed directly to the euro. Either way, the bias in the British public's assessment of the euro is likely to become even more sceptical than it is today. Only after the physical euro is created will this period of limbo come to an end. Only after 2002 will the British public be able to begin a serious and objective assessment of joining EMU.

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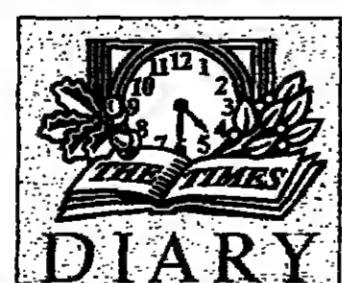
Wills power

A MINISTER appointed to regulate businesses in the aftermath of Peter Mandelson's disgrace faces censure by his new department for his own entrepreneurial activities. Michael Wills, new minister for Trade and Industry (with responsibility for small businesses) is in trouble over his own extremely small business. Wills, director of Attractions Limited, a struggling TV production outfit, has not sent the company's annual return to Companies House — which reports to his own DTT. All limited companies are requested to do so or face a court order.

Attractions Ltd is now so late that it has been sent a default notice and is waiting for its final warning. If it still fails to comply, the DTT will step in. "It can easily end in court," says a gleeful Bob from Companies House.

Wills (right) seems keen to distance himself from the firm. "I am going to sell the shares at the end of the week to the other partners," he tells me. "We have no interest in it now. It has stopped operations." Not that it was ever particularly active. Under Wills, Attractions made a Channel Five series, featuring fun sites for all the family to visit. "It was a great idea, but they never recommissioned the series," Wills ventures.

Before being appointed a Trade minister earlier this week, Wills was producer and director of Juniper Communications. During his headship, he tells me he



the unseemly sacking of Dr Martin Neary, the organist, by the Dean, Dr Wesley Carr — hence the "desire for a more personal celebration than recent royal weddings".

Panto prince

HAS Robert Harris been spinning a tale about his chum Peter Mandelson? The novelist told journalists inquiring about Wendy, so named by his old security guards, over the new year that he had "a feeling he's gone abroad". The next day, as darkness fell over Oxford, panto-goers at the Playhouse for a *Cinderella* matinee saw Harris and Wendy, clutching a child of his notorious apologist (Wendy is fairy godfather to Robert's youngest, Matilda) before slipping into Brown's for a bite. Warbles my wicked sister: "I bet the children yelled 'your career's behind you'."

• IF THE dawn chorus is a little subdued at Greenwich these days, blame Greg Hayman, Done spokesman. The man hoping that the black redstarts do not nest in an awkward spot on the construction site keeps pigeons in Wirksworth, Derbyshire, where his bird-control skills are legendary. "He is the first person to call if a pigeon needs strangling," I am told.

Silent honour

THE public Honours system appears to be no so public after all. I have learnt that Paddy Devlin, an Ulster Catholic and staunch national-



• FLIPPIN' Windsor knot has come undone!

alist received a CBE this year but appeared nowhere in the New Year's Honours List. Devlin was keen to keep news of his honour from his republican cronies — but he still wanted the honour, thanks very much. Whitehall says that while this is unusual, Devlin is entitled to privacy. I hope the Queen is pleased with her new Commander.

• ARRIVING in leisurely style at Diary Towers is the Child Support Agency Christmas card. "Goodwill towards men," it states. A U-turn?

Free and easy

TONY BLAIR spurned an offer to holiday in Blighty before his rather fraught trip to the Seychelles. Fiona Bruce, an old habitué of the islands, was so alarmed that the PM should return despite the "appalling human rights record" (I think she means in the Seychelles) that she offered the use of her home in the Lake District instead and entered into quite a correspondence with the PO. "It only has three bedrooms, but there is a sofa-bed too," she tells me. "And there is plenty of room in the village for his guards." It would also have been free — saving the Blairs £30,000.

• CULT television has lured another victim. Helena Bonham



Carter wants to join Charlie's Angels. The *Seventies* series which slipped *Faith*, *Jaclyn Smith* and *Kate Jackson* into tight trousers and disturbed the adolescent dreams of a generation, also appeals to Helena, my favourite actress. "From a young age I wanted to be one of the Angels," she says. "I wanted to be *Kate Jackson* (the relatively clever angel, *Sabrina Duncan*). Even though I was a very shy child who didn't like standing up in front of people." Helena has hinted her pitch well. A film, with new Angels serving the mysterious *Charlie Townsend*, is imminent.

JASPER GERARD

You can't hurry me, love

Prince Edward was right to wait, argues James Brown

Five years might seem like a long time even for a Prince to go a courting. But I can assure you that even as Sophie Rhys-Jones's friends are screaming "At last, what took him so long?", Prince Edward's mates will be worrying about how quickly he has rushed into this. Marriage (or proposal of) is definitely the most awkward part of the modern male/female interface. And not just for royals.

The real truth of modern relationships is that men and women have never been closer in their need for commitment. Yet after a few months of frolicking in the lusty froth of a new relationship, as a couple are congratulating themselves on having found someone with whom they want to share their bed, *Flake*, and time their thoughts will be moving at very different speeds. The women, especially those in their late 20s and early 30s, will be considering their new beau as a potential husband, whereas the boyfriend might just be considering throwing his pornographic magazines away.

Men are cautious about rushing into marriage with good reason. Those of us born around or after England's 1966 World Cup win are unwitting victims of *A Generation of Divorce*. It's high enough in men's minds for the British singer *Finlay Quaye* to admit "I'm a Snapper" — the Irish term for being illegitimate — and "I wish I had a papay to show me right from wrong". As well as worrying about creating a marriage that will last no longer than the average football manager's contract, men have few decent role-models to show them the way.

Five years ago every mother in the land would have loved to have *Will Carling* or *Kenneth Branagh* as a son-in-law and yet both have crashed their marriages all over the tabloids. These two squeaky clean men fell at the first hurdle. But genuine masculine heroes are no better. *Paul Weller* is divorced. *Robert De Niro* was recently embroiled in a French scandal and *Glenn Hoddle* spent more time with his faith healer and his mistress than with his wife.

Good marital role-models are few and far between for young men. *Michael and Shakira Caine* spring to mind, as do *Jonathan and Jane Ross*. These are good fellas with front and style, who see their wives as an important part of their lives not just an extra seat at a premiere.

It's not laziness or fear that prevent real men from rushing down the aisle, but genuine concern that they don't take on something they can't handle. Thirty years ago women would have been happy to be thanked for putting the dinner on the table and amazed if the husband did the washing up.

Nowadays women would like you to look like *Leonardo DiCaprio*, charm like *Johnny Vaughan* and behave like *Gary Lineker*. Pretty hard going for an average guy with British teeth, second-hand jokes, and only *Walkers Crisps* in common with the Football Focus golden boy.

I still don't see why you have to get married. The fashion designer Paul Smith and his partner, Pauline, have lived happily together for more than thirty years with no sign of a wedding ring. Following Peter Cook's example, I initially tried to persuade my lovely girlfriend Kaz to get married but live in a different house from me, for her own sake. But rightly, she wasn't having it.

When I did propose, a gloriously drunken spur-of-the-moment affair in a London bar after just three months, I woke the next day to negotiate a 12-month settling-in period before we would get engaged. That gap relieved us of any pressure that might have been brought on by a post-proposal cool-down.

Certainly the colleague who met and wed a woman within a month wasn't happy to discover he'd married a maniac and it was no surprise when, a very painful year later, we had to scoop him off the platform at Clapham Junction — a broken man minus his dignity and his flat.

So if it does appear that men are a little slow in asking women to marry them, it's with good reason. After all, they're just flexing that organ women are always complaining they don't see enough of — the brain. A slow march towards engagement isn't a sign that men don't care, it's proof that they do. I've never asked my best man, eight years into his relationship, why he hasn't proposed because it's none of my damned business. Any woman who was worth their salt and wanted to get married should be able to strong-arm their partner to the registry office.

Once my 12 months were up there was more nag than the Cheltenham Gold Cup. Over a year into wedded bliss, I've only just managed to get the wedding photo developed and am now considering getting a ring. Ladies, getting married is the least of your problems, getting your husbands to realize what they've done is much harder. Don't panic though, not all guys are so reluctant. When David Batty, the England footballer, heard he would be unable to attend his agent's third wedding because of international duty, he replied: "Never mind, I'll go to the next one."

The author is Editor of *GQ* magazine.



A LISTING SERVICE

A winter chill hides the NHS's real problems

At the last election, the Labour Party made five pledges. One of these was to cut the number of people on hospital waiting lists by 100,000. This pledge, so simple to make, easy to understand and seemingly attractive, is now returning to haunt the Government. By attaching such totemic significance to this target, Ministers risk distorting priorities and ignoring more pressing problems within the National Health Service. Yesterday, despite being able to announce a record monthly fall in the number of people waiting for hospital treatment, the Government was facing the usual seasonal cries that the NHS is in crisis. It cannot blame this entirely on the current outbreak of flu, which has not yet reached epidemic levels. The NHS is suffering from a number of debilitating illnesses, the cure for which is not, as Ministers appear to think, simply spending more taxpayers' money.

The number of people on hospital waiting lists is a crude measure of the NHS's performance. This figure does not reflect the time patients have to wait — simply the length of the queue — nor the type of treatments people have received. Instead, putting pressure on the NHS to meet government targets could mean doctors and nurses place political priorities above patients' needs. By tending to those who need quick, straightforward operations before others who require lengthy, complex treatments, the waiting list falls faster.

This has not deterred Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, from spending £417 million this year to cut waiting lists, and a further £159 million to cope with any potential winter crisis. His ferocious opponent in the Shadow Cabinet, Ann Widdecombe, is right to highlight that

despite this extra expenditure, the number of people waiting more than a year has doubled under this Government. Yet, even if there were more beds, and even if the emergency package had been announced earlier in the year as Miss Widdecombe suggests, this would have not tackled the main problems facing the NHS.

The nursing profession is in crisis. The NHS has at least 8,000 nursing vacancies. Hospitals, under strain to fill these gaps, have resorted to recruiting nurses from as far afield as the Philippines and South Africa, or hiring them from private agencies — the cost of which has doubled. To remedy this, Mr Dobson must make nursing a more attractive career for young people. A junior nurse is paid a fifth less than a policewoman. Not surprisingly, attempts to woo more recruits have failed: there are spaces on nurses' training courses for the first time ever. Until this shortage is tackled, lack of nurses will remain the single most important constraint on the health service's performance.

Crucial though this task is, it will not address the fundamental dilemma facing Mr Dobson. However many more nurses are recruited, more hospitals are built and wards opened, the public's expectations will always exceed the NHS's capacity. Anecdotes of people with flu ringing 999 typify the culture of entitlement that now exists. Mr Dobson is trying to feed this appetite by spending an extra £21 billion on health over the next three years. This will merely fuel, rather than control, public expectations. By focusing on such simplistic targets as waiting lists, ignoring the nursing crisis and failing to address this underlying problem, Mr Dobson and his successors will face cries of "crisis" for many winters to come.

WIND OF CHANGE

South Africa faces an uncertain modernisation agenda

When Tony Blair originally decided to visit South Africa, this week he must have thought that his tour would be a relatively uncomplicated exercise. The trip offered a set of appealing diplomatic encounters in friendly territory before the Prime Minister returned to the hurly-burly of domestic politics. His schedule includes confirmation of defence orders for British companies worth £1 billion, a new aid and trade package, and a round of meetings in which Mr Blair and his entourage will bid farewell to Nelson Mandela, and then develop a deeper relationship with Thabo Mbeki, the man who, almost certainly, will soon become South Africa's President.

The turbulent events at home over the past two weeks have altered the context of Mr Blair's arrangements. After talks with Mr Mandela and Mr Mbeki in Pretoria today, the Prime Minister will take the opportunity of a speech in Cape Town tomorrow to restate his commitment to the modernisation credo of new Labour: economic realism, fresh initiatives in education and reform of the welfare state. Although Mr Blair's message may be aimed at a constituency 10,000 miles away, his language will be familiar to South Africans.

For the past five years, the African National Congress has struggled to make the transition from the slogans of socialism to the practicalities of power. Mr Mandela has presided over a sharp reduction in public debt, a quite substantial degree of market liberalisation and a modest element of privatisation. As the neo-liberal Democratic Party, invariably the ANC's most effective opposition, has often argued, Mr Mbeki will have to move much more

decisively in this direction if he is to secure South Africa's economic future. This has not proved a popular programme with the party faithful. The ANC has sought to maintain an uneasy truce between technocrats who accept the need for reform and a mass membership that would much prefer a dramatic extension of affirmative action and the redistribution of income. Mr Mandela's personal stature has permitted his Government to stick with difficult but essential policies despite the fact that real incomes and employment are lower now than when the ANC took office.

It will not be as easy for Mr Mbeki to hold back his party's radical faction. They will demand that the ANC takes the opportunity that may shortly arise to alter South Africa's constitutional arrangements. This would involve restructuring a judiciary that has proved as independent under the ANC as it often was in the apartheid era. Any such change would be rightly seen as casting doubt on the ANC's democratic credentials. Mr Mbeki needs to resist this temptation. He also must take much more dramatic action against a crime wave that is undermining South Africa's international reputation.

Mr Blair, may thus, by accident have found himself in an appropriate place to make the case for his political philosophy. Whether South Africa becomes an encouraging example for "Third Way" modernisers worldwide will depend in very large degree on Mr Mbeki's agenda. The Prime Minister can at least take comfort in the fact that Mr Mandela's Government is — despite party feuds, economic slowdown and allegations of petty corruption — still coasting towards comfortable re-election.

NATURAL JUSTICE

Financial regulation must be fair

The general public may have scant sympathy for Keith Percy, a City fund manager who yesterday had to accept the indignity of a public reprimand and a hefty bill from the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation. Those who are fearful of holding onto their own jobs, at a fraction of the salaries that prevail in the Square Mile, will probably feel that Mr Percy's previously well rewarded years might provide sufficient cushion against the current disapproval of the City police. They may note, too, that Mr Percy is once more happily and no doubt lucratively at work in the fund management industry.

But even high earning City folk deserve justice. Mr Percy's case has highlighted qualms over the way in which the financial services are regulated in this country. The man who was chief executive of Morgan Grenfell Asset Management Ltd when its idiosyncratic fund manager, Peter Young, contrived to lose more than £200 million of investors' cash — later reimbursed by the company — may be judged to have failed in his job, but he is not unique in that. Many a failed chief executive in industry is sent packing with a generous pecuniary farewell handshake, a practice of which investors have been extraordinarily tolerant.

Those at work in the City, however, appear to be at risk of treatment at the other end of the tolerance spectrum. They can be barred from practising their trade for years and heavily fined. It was August 1996 when Mr Percy was shown the door at Morgan Grenfell. Had he continued to

fight his regulator by going to a tribunal, he claims that he would have been at risk of losing £1 million, a sum that not even the most successful of City practitioners may feel able to wager. There are some who suspect that such a system comes dangerously close to a denial of natural justice, and have said as much to the European Court of Human Rights.

It is crucial for those who entrust their savings to finance houses and insurance companies that they can have complete confidence in the way the industry is policed. That is now the ultimate responsibility of Howard Davies, the Lord High Regulator of all things financial. As head of the Financial Services Authority, Mr Davies wants to devise a regulatory system which, he says, is fair, not too costly and able to respond to mischief effectively and efficiently.

Such an ambition should find favour with both the financial services industry and its users. Yet, as it assumes the regulatory responsibilities of the 11 separate organisations which have policed the City, there are fears that the FSA may wield an excessive amount of power as investigator, prosecutor, judge and jury. Mr Davies is aware of the risks and is instituting what is intended to be an impartial committee to oversee the dispensation of justice. Its task should not be under-estimated: if the FSA does not live up to Mr Davies' laudable ambitions, City practitioners will demand danger money and more lawyerly protection — and investors and pensioners will foot the bill.

Flu puts hospitals at full stretch

From Dr Roger Jay

Sir, The idea that hospitals are full of patients with simple flu who should not be there (reports, January 5 and 6) is nonsense. As a physician, I am seeing about twice the usual number of emergency admissions. All are genuinely in need of hospital treatment and few can be sent home after brief assessment.

The £159 million earmarked by Mr Frank Dobson is of no use at this stage of a crisis, when there is a serious recruitment problem for doctors and nurses. Because we are working at full capacity throughout the year there is no slack in the system to cope with the increase in admissions.

Our colleagues in surgery, gynaecology and psychiatry whose beds we are filling would be delighted if general medical beds were funded and staffed adequately.

Yours sincerely,

ROGER JAY,
18 St George's Terrace, East Boldon,
Tyne and Wear NE36 0LU.
1/2031.1753@compuserve.com

January 6.

From Mr Ray Ellis

Sir, Officially there is no flu epidemic.

I am recovering from the flu. My son has had flu and it looks as if my daughter is on her way down with it. My son's girlfriend's family all had flu over Christmas. My father's wife is in bed with it. Hospitals are swamped by flu victims. Our road has seen flu in more than half of the 19 homes in the last month.

You report Dr Doug Fleming as saying: "There is no point in going to see your doctor... unless you have a serious chest disease or are elderly and living on your own." Most of the folk I know have not been to the doctor. How then do the powers that be know that there is no flu epidemic?

Yours faithfully,

RAY ELLIS,
15 Monfort Road, Kemsing,
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 6SA.
ray.ellis@rushmore.co.uk

January 6.

From the Reverend Peter Mullen

Sir, During the current flu outbreak we are told, "Drink more fluids". But does this advice come from the Department of Health or the Ministry for Tautology and Pleonasm?

Yours sincerely,

PETER MULLEN,
The Watch House,
10 Giltspur Street, EC1A 9DE.

January 6.

Quality of NHS

From Dr G. Murray Jones

Sir, The letter from the Association of Surgeons (December 29; see also letters, November 19 and 28) makes it difficult for an old member of the General Medical Services Committee of the BMA to keep silent.

The NHS intended the GP to be at the centre, with consultant advice and specialist treatment readily and freely available when necessary. We strove to improve the lot of the GP while, unfortunately, the consultants were not anxious to increase their numbers.

Mr Robert Lane says that "Nobody in the profession condones poor performance", yet it took a long time to expose the Bristol saga which he mentions, and we know the fate of one who did not condone.

In the new year if all the profession becomes worthy of its calling nobility will be restored and recruitment will increase.

Yours faithfully,
G. MURRAY JONES,
58 Danbyryn Avenue,
Radyr, Cardiff CF4 8DD.
December 29.

Fallow ground

From Mr J. H. D. Gibson

Sir, I read today of the "farmer" using some of his land for a burial ground. Although his holding is "too small to be viable as an agricultural enterprise", and although he does not grow crops or rear livestock, he collects some £14,000 per year from the European Union set-aside scheme and for doing nothing but manage his land as a wildlife habitat.

My back garden is also too small to be agriculturally viable, and I do not grow crops or rear livestock, but manage it as a wildlife (plus next door's cat) habitat. I am applying for set-aside grants.

Yours etc.
J. H. D. GIBSON,
19 Evingline Close,
Worcester WR5 2DB.
December 29.

Cruelty to dogs

From Mrs Susan M. Barnard

Sir, Your report (January 5) of two policemen who were dismissed after their convictions for cruelty to their dogs makes me wonder how they (or indeed any policeman) would have fared if their alleged victims had been people rather than animals.

Yours faithfully,
SUSAN M. BARNARD,
4 Egerion Drive, Hale,
Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 8EE.
January 5.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

School flexibility needed to allow family holidays

From Mr K. J. Hard

Sir, The head of the London Oratory School, Mr John McIntosh, is reported to insist that parents observe his three Hs — haircuts, holidays and homework. "Head castigates Blair for term-time holiday", later editions, January 4; see also letters, same day.

The first two Hs are essentially trivial. They have little to do with the process of education — a process which the educational establishment would have us believe can take place only in schools.

The Prime Minister should instruct

Mr David Blunkett to remove the requirement for parents to obtain permission to withdraw their children for up to ten days' family holiday during term-time. If this requirement were removed (at least until children embark on GCSE courses) then Mr Blair would save himself, and other parents, from arbitrary decisions which I believe are supported neither by evidence nor common sense.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN L. EVANS,

The Chaplaincy, Alnur's Hospital, Goring Heath, Oxfordshire RG8 7RR.

January 4.

From Mr Iain Peden

Sir, I do not have the option of taking my daughter on a cheap, mid-term holiday. I'm a teacher. Members of the Pay Review Body please note.

Yours,

IAIN PEDEN,

8 Albany Terrace, Worcester WR1 3DU.

January 4.

From Mr H. J. C. Jones

Sir, Is it the Prime Minister of our country to be told by a schoolmaster that he may or may not take his family away on holiday, simply because the school is operating a by now, antiquated three-term year?

Do we believe that the Blair children would be damaged for life because they miss a week or two of binomial theory or Latin grammar?

Surely it is not beyond the bounds of possibility to shed the three-term method and offer teaching all year round? Parents can then take their families away for the period most convenient to them.

Our teachers have had it too much

and their own way and seem to be obsessed with the belief that education occurs only within the four walls of a school building, and that this education will be offered when they decide.

I feel it must be doing Mr and Mrs Blair a power of good to have their children with them and educating them within the family circle — and it must be doing the young Blairs some good also, spending so much time with a very influential person in world affairs, even if he is only "Dad" to them.

Yours sincerely,

H. J. C. JONES,

18 Millers Meadow, Rainow, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 5UE.

howard@hjc.globalnet.co.uk

January 5.

From Mr Robert R. Rodwell

Sir, Some amelioration of the school holidays/term-time situation would be achieved if schools in mainland Britain modelled their working year on that which has prevailed in Northern Ireland since compulsory education began.

The school summer holiday here is at least two months, from the end of June into September — a reflection, presumably, of the seasonal labour requirements of former subsistence farming. All the other holidays, particularly half-terms, are correspondingly shorter.

Children in Northern Ireland spend as much time at school as their mainland Great Britain counterparts, but the longer summer vacation gives a longer period over which the peak family-holiday demand is spread.

Yours, hard at work,

BOB RODWELL,

86 Shore Road,

Ballyhalbert, Newtownards,

Co Down BT22 1BJ.

January 4.

From Mr I. Green

Sir, I travel daily by bus to Chester (seven miles) using an excellent quarter-hourly service.

Although the journey is scheduled to take 23 minutes, the target is only ever achieved during school holidays. Indeed the journey can take almost twice as long on a wet Monday morning in term-time.

Surely if school holidays were staggered time, fuel and stress would be saved for all road users alike.

Yours faithfully,

NICHOLAS GREEN,

22 Trelvyan Way,

Rossett, Wrexham LL12 0EJ.

January 5.

The 51st state

From Mr Graham Bate

Sir, Although the abolition of the House of Lords is a strong temptation, the rest of Dr Philip Roberts's list of benefits of the UK becoming the 51st state of the US (letter, December 30) is heavily outweighed by the crosses we would have to bear.

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OBITUARIES

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PAUL RIVIERE

Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Rivière, OBE, MM, of the French Resistance, died on December 16 aged 86. He was born on November 22, 1912.

As the Resistance officer responsible on the ground for handling the RAP's paratrooping, landing and pickup operations in the southern half of France in 1943-44, Paul Rivière was responsible for the reception into France and the return to England of more agents than any other similar Free French controller. The landings of SOE agents were made the more perilous when it was decided to supplement the Lysander, with its spectacular short landing and take-off, by the much larger and heavier Hudson bomber, which, modified as a troop carrier, could bring in and retrieve many more agents at once.

But Hudson operations, though more effective, also involved greater danger. Whereas the Lysander, even well laden, could be airborne within a hundred yards and could land and take off on dimly marked grass strips by

the aid of its own landing lights, the Hudson required up to five times this length with a 450-metre long flare path of electric torches for night landings.

In carrying out his duties, Rivière had to travel all over the enemy-occupied area between Switzerland, Bordeaux, the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean by car, train and bicycle, journeys made the more dangerous as he was frequently carrying arms, large sums of money or wireless equipment. Yet his astonishing coolness and courage carried him through the controls.

Like his father, Paul Claude Marie Rivière, had been a schoolmaster before the war, but in 1939 he was mobilised as an instructor of cavalry cadets at Saumur. In June 1940 he fought for three days to hold up the German crossing of the Loire.

In the wake of the defeat of France he joined Henri de Ruy's resistance movement, Combat, at the end of 1941. At first he distributed clandestine news sheets, before, in June 1942, conducting his first paratroop operation, the reception of a saboteur and six heavy

containers. Soon afterwards he was arrested for distributing propaganda and but was given a prison sentence of only four months, which he served in a Vichy prison in Lyons.

In November he helped to receive a Lysander bringing 20 million francs for Jean Moulin, the former prefect of the Eure et Loire department who had remained in France and become de Gaulle's chief of the Resistance. In April 1943 he helped Bruno Larat, the head of air and sea operations for the previously unoccupied zone of France, to receive a Hudson, which returned in the following month to take eight agents to England, including Rivière, who was to have a programme of training by the SOE, the RAF and the Free French. This was to include the vital training in organising Hudson landings. On the occasion of the June landing Hudson's flarepath of electric torches was laid out by Larat, helped by Geneviève Faquin (Jannik) whom Rivière later married.

While Rivière was in England Larat was arrested and Rivière was selected to replace him. His programme of training had to be curtailed so that



Rivière: risky clandestine operations in occupied France

he could be parachuted into France as soon as possible after he was qualified to receive Hudson landings. In his role as Head of the Section for Landing and Parachute

Operations (SAP) he had to find suitable large and level meadows remote from German troops, having been accepted by the Air Ministry by coded wireless telegrams and

recruit local teams to form "reception committees". He also had to organise secure hospitality for passengers before and after operations, and arrange clandestine movements for all involved at times when any movement was forbidden by the Germans.

In each moonlit period from July to October 1943 Rivière received at least one Hudson landing by crews from No 161 Special Duties Squadron. In October alone three Hudsons landed on his fields, to carry to England 26 people including Resistance and Maquis leaders. Among the most important passengers were Vincent Auriol, a future President of France, and General de Lattre de Tassigny, one of the four Allied Commanders who later took the surrender of Germany.

For several of these Hudson pick-ups Rivière's assistant was Jannik. In one, in some confusion about where the aircraft would touch down, he found himself flat on the ground with one main wheel rolling through the grass on each side of him. Luckily the tail wheel had not yet touched the ground. In the morning one of the gendarmes investi-

gating the incident for the Vichy authorities found Rivière's spectacles, pipe and torch and surreptitiously returned them to him.

The penultimate Hudson pickup supervised by Rivière almost came to grief when a hard frost gave way to a sudden thaw, making the ground perilously soft. Nevertheless the desperate situation of the two agents to be picked up — Raymond Aubrac, a member of de Gaulle's Consultative Assembly in Algiers, had just escaped from a Gestapo prison and his wife Lucie was about to give birth — seemed to justify the risk. In the event the Hudson was stuck in mud for two and a half hours, in spite of all the efforts of local villagers and their horses, but it eventually took clear of the Gestapo.

The last Hudson received by Rivière was in May 1944 and this one it took him back to England. In British archives it was recorded of him: "No other organiser in France was of greater help to his British colleagues in the field."

He next joined de Gaulle's secret service as a lieutenant-colonel. After the war he joined the regular army and

retained that rank until 1962, serving in Indo-China, Germany and Japan, where he was Military Attaché from 1956 to 1959, when he became responsible for Military Security in Algeria. In 1962 he was elected Gaullist Deputy for the Loire, holding his seat until 1978. While a member of Parliament he was concerned especially with the defence budget. He was also a delegate to the Council of Europe, where he and his wife were very popular with British and other delegates.

In retirement he and Jannik lived happily at his native village, Montagny (of which he served for some years as mayor) in the big house he had built. They also had a flat in Paris, from which they could easily visit their friends in England. Besides his British decorations (Officer of the Order of the British Empire and Military Medal), Rivière was a Companion of the Liberation and a Commander of the Legion of Honour. He was also decorated by Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

His wife predeceased him. He leaves three sons and a daughter.

JERRY QUARRY



Under fire: Quarry on the end of a right from Ali on their first meeting in 1970

Jerry Quarry, American heavyweight boxer, died of pneumonia in Templeton, California, on January 3 aged 53, having suffered from dementia pugilistica for many years. He was born in Los Angeles on May 15, 1945.

ALTHOUGH he earned more than \$2 million in the boxing ring and had some good quality victories in the 1970s, notably over Floyd Patterson and the British and European champion Jack Bodell, Jerry Quarry will be best remembered for one of his defeats, that by Muhammad Ali in 1970. It was not that the fight was a classic. Quarry was stopped on cuts in the third round after providing some useful range-finding and target practice for Ali. But the occasion was the former world champion's return to the ring after a three-and-a-half-year enforced lay-off, and the boxing public was agog to see what effect this inactivity might have on his remarkable powers.

The heavyweight division had acquired a new champion in the person of the ferocious knockout specialist Joe Frazier. The question on all lips was whether Ali, with so many personal, financial and religious problems to distract him over the previous 40

months, still had the stomach for ring combat at that level. "Irish" Jerry Quarry was certainly no pushover. In the aftermath of Ali's being stripped of his crown for refusing the draft, he had only narrowly lost a 15-round points decision against Jimmy Ellis for the World Boxing Association title. A hard counterpuncher, he was at that time ranked No 3 in the world.

In the event, Ali earned a victory at the end of three rounds as blood from a cut caused the referee to rule Quarry unfit to continue. But, though welcomed ecstatically by the former champion's fans, the result contained for the more knowledgeable members of his camp some worrying statistics. Principal among these was that before the clash of heads which caused the cut, Quarry had been dramatically improving the percentage of punches he laid on Ali with every minute; the fight went on. In the third, Quarry had hurt Ali with body punches and at the end he was far from cowed by him. It was only the sight of his opponent's blood that at the end pumped fresh life into a rapidly tiring Ali.

Jerry Quarry was born in Los Angeles into a family of Irish descent. Two of his brothers were to become boxers, one a world title contender as a light heavyweight. He

had a hard childhood as his father moved from state to state in pursuit of labouring work. But the ring provided him with the means to better himself and, after turning

professional he won his first 20 fights before dropping a ten rounds points decision to the highly-fancied Eddie Machen in 1966.

In the following year he beat

the former world champion Floyd Patterson on points, thus qualifying himself for the elimination contest to find a successor to Ali, who had been stripped of his world title. By this time he was regarded as something of a "white hope" in an era in which black boxers dominated the heavyweight division. In February 1968 Quarry stopped Ted Spencer in three rounds to earn himself a shot at Jimmy Ellis's World Boxing Association title.

In April of that year Quarry was narrowly outpointed by Ellis over 15 rounds in Oakland, California, but in June 1969 he was back for another world title tilt, this time at Joe Frazier's World Boxing Council version of the crown. In the event, Frazier stopped him in seven rounds in New York and proceeded to unify the world heavyweight title by hammering Ellis to defeat in four rounds in February 1970.

In October that year Quarry went to Atlanta, Georgia, for his famous meeting with Ali, an encounter which left him feeling aggrieved at his propensity to cut so easily, but by no means daunted at the possibility of meeting Ali again should the opportunity arise. As a contender he was certainly no journeyman, merely to be disposed of by serious men on their way to a

boxer such as he was and Europe's best was harshly

indeed demonstrated at the Empire Pool, Wembley, in November 1971 when he took on the British and European champion, Jack Bodell. Fragrant pre-fight visions of the title opportunities opening up for Bodell should he win were brutally dispelled within seconds of the first bell. Determined to show a fine aggression for the British fans, Bodell floundered gamely forwards but was soon bouncing off the ropes under the sheer savagery of Quarry's punches. Bodell's tactics suited the counterpunching Irish American perfectly, and within a few more seconds a perfect hook to the head had the European champion on his knees. Bodell rose immediately and swung his southpaw right. But it was a move of desperation. Quarry whipped over his own right and Bodell was rolling on the canvas to be counted out. There were 64 seconds on the timerkeeper's watch.

Although he continued to challenge in the toughest company, Quarry never really prospered thereafter. He challenged Muhammad Ali again, but was again stopped by cuts, though this time in seven rounds. However, in 1973 he had two good wins, outpointing Ron Lyle and then flattening the big-punching Ernie Shavers in one round. He next fought Frazier for the second time but, though Frazier had by then (1974) surrendered his world crown to the even more menacing George Foreman, he was still too strong and too rough for Quarry, and gave the Irish American a severe beating over seven rounds. After a further defeat, at the hands of Ken Norton, Quarry announced his retirement in 1975.

He was several times lured out of retirement — the last time preposterously in 1992 at the age of 47, in the vain belief that he might emulate George Foreman's return to the ring in middle age. For a purse of \$10,000 he was battered senseless over six rounds by a nonentity in an unlicensed club fight.

The outcome was fortunate. Not only was the surgeon at home, but Dorothy took an immediate liking to him and confided to him that she was going to be a doctor. He replied that, although he had really made quite a good job of amputating himself, he had

given her some chloroform and tied it up. She felt he had treated her an equal.

Dorothy Williams went to a girls' public day school, Birkhead High, which encouraged pupils to be independent and aim at a career, but only in teaching, which was seen, even by her progressive-minded parents, as the only permissible profession. Medicine, which involved co-education in embarrassing subjects, in the company of young men, was "unsuitable for a lady".

By 1917, however, when she was due to go to Cambridge, women doctors were justifying their existence on the battlefields and their parents were prepared to compromise. She could go to Cambridge to study science and, after graduating, could choose between teaching and medicine. She chose anatomy and physiology for two of her sciences, regarding the reference to teaching as a face-saver.

Wartime austerities had left her mark on Cambridge and when she arrived at Newnham she found goats grazing on the lawns tended by the college's biology don. Food was scarce and often unpalatable.

made to feel unwelcome, however crowded the classes. She soon learnt "tag-and-bottle anaesthesia" under the encouraging eye of the surgeon.

As soon as she qualified in 1922 she quickly obtained resident posts in medicine, surgery and gynaecology at the Liverpool Royal Infirmary. This meant long hours: on one occasion, she was called out of bed in the middle of the night to cope with a mad ex-serviceman who, in the manner of a sergeant-major, ordered her to "form fours" and made her march up and down the corridors searching for the enemy until a police van arrived and took him away.

In 1925 she married Samuel Saxon Barton, a surgeon gynaecologist, and decided to specialise in eye surgery, so that she could combine her career with family life. Later she became consultant ophthalmic surgeon at St Paul's Eye Hospital, Liverpool, and at Nobles Hospital, Isle of Man.

She retired in 1962 and later moved to Oxford, where she became an expert grower of roses and orchids. Her husband predeceased her, but she is survived by three sons.

PERSONAL COLUMN

MEMORIAL SERVICES

TICKETS FOR SALE

FOR SALE

LEGAL NOTICES

SERVICES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

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FLATSHARE

TRUSTEE ACTS

UK RECOGNIZES COMMUNIST CHINA

COURT & SOCIAL

DOMESTIC & DIRECTORY

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

ON THIS DAY

PERSONAL COLUMN

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF

NEWS

Family wedding for Prince

■ Prince Edward is determined to have a family wedding rather than a public spectacle when he crowns a five-year courtship by marrying Sophie Rhys-Jones later this year.

The couple, whose engagement was announced by Buckingham Palace, will marry in the late spring or early summer at St George's Chapel inside Windsor Castle. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were said to be thrilled at the news of their youngest son's impending marriage to the 33-year old public relations executive. **Pages 1, 35**

Intensive care service in crisis

■ Doctors gave a warning that the intensive care service is in crisis, as figures showed that the number of reported flu cases had risen by more than 80 per cent in a week. The waiting list initiative is in danger of being knocked off course. **Pages 1, 9**

Boost for Brown

The Prime Minister moved swiftly to bolster Gordon Brown's position and put an end to the simmering feud between the rival camps of the two men which has rocked the government. **Page 2**

Monty's view

Viscount Montgomery of Alamein dismissed the African "as a complete savage" who was incapable of developing the continent himself, according to a secret report he prepared after a tour of 12 states. **Page 7**

Cot death risk

Baby killers are able to go undetected because coroners are too ready to accept that a child has been a victim of cot death, says an infant deaths expert. **Page 8**

Staying with cars

The Government's plan to shift people out of cars and on to public transport is unlikely to succeed without much greater investment, geographers were told. **Page 10**

Seeking a dark side

Psychologists have developed a test that companies can use to discover if their managers have a hidden "dark side". **Page 11**

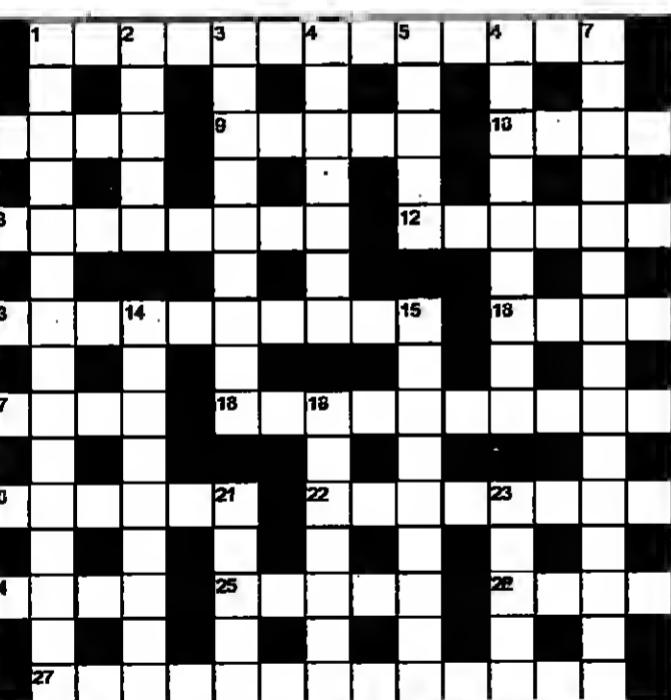
Television sex

Television viewers are becoming more tolerant of the portrayal of sex — but believe that it is often a ploy to boost ratings. **Page 13**

London enjoys January heatwave

London enjoyed its hottest January day for more than 150 years as severe flooding brought chaos to householders and motorists in northern England. As the capital basked in temperatures which climbed to 15.7C (60F) the town of Kendal in Cumbria was almost cut off as torrential overnight rain forced police to shut nine "A" roads. **Page 1**

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,994



ACROSS

- 1 Carpet — what to do if it's too big? (4,3,1,5)
- 8 Piece of card (4).
- 9 Twist in pain — not good (5).
- 10 I left America, returning to this country (4).
- 11 Fence making a secret collection (8).
- 12 Replace second character in Macbeth (6).
- 13 Repairs frames (8,2).
- 14 Take a risk, refurbishing English policemen (4).
- 15 Top spy heard but not seen (4).
- 16 Poorly miner about to get a bit of percussion (10).
- 20 Can someone lacking energy set about one? (6).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,993

POMPOMS THIUMPHANT
A GOURMET
CONSAIGNE BACKS
JALSA EGC
POSSA STAKER PART
Y I W A C A
EASTNORTHTHEAST
S H C O E E
CRYBLUERMURDER
R I N I C S
ALLIABOARD ASSAM
G E E M H L P U
EAGER INELEGANT
N A A S A C C T
DELLILAH DUTTHERRY

- 2 Cut off a property right and scoffed (8).
- 24 Result of court's pronouncement? (4).
- 25 Look for water and plunge into it (5).
- 26 Cake slab a bakery stocks (4).
- 27 Shameful abuse of delicate birds (13).
- 28 DOWN

 - 1 Uncommon and economical method of sowing (4,2,3,6).
 - 2 It can bark king after a month (5).
 - 3 To get the better of strike, speak your mind! (3,4,2).
 - 4 Handles moving right up to limits (7).
 - 5 Gambles right in front of one's eyes? (5).
 - 6 Prompt to take a rest (9).
 - 7 This officer is no bellicose captain, briefly maddened (6,9).
 - 14 Considers a particular day of the month to come off the fence (4,5).
 - 15 Careful! Don't become involved with viper (9).
 - 19 Cried — over nothing, end up getting married (7).
 - 21 Bottom of drain damaged (5).
 - 23 Robert, an upwardly mobile, rich and powerful man (5).

Times Two Crossword, page 52

LATEST ROAD AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

UK Weather: All regions 0336 444 910
UK: All regions 0336 441 246
Met & Cork 0336 441 246
Met & Cork 0336 441 247
Met & Cork 0336 441 248
Met & Cork 0336 441 210
Channel crossing
Met & Cork 0336 441 249
C & Cork 0336 441 247

Shares surge: The UK stock market

closed within striking distance of its all-time high, having been

driven up by rampant bank and tel-

ecom shares. **Page 27**

Percy settles: Keith Percy, former

chief executive of Morgan Grenfell

Asset Management, has settled his

long-running dispute with the city

watchdog over the Peter Young affair. **Page 27**

Next sales: Shares in clothing re-

tailer Next were back in fashion yes-

terday after a sparkling Christmas

sales update. **Page 27**

Markets: The FTSE 100 index rose

190.6 points to 6148.8. The pound

rose 0.05 cents to \$1.6560 but fell

0.42p against the euro to 70.77p.

The sterling index fell to 92.2 from

99.7. **Page 30**

Help for Mbeki

Tony Blair hopes to boost the im-

age of Thabo Mbeki among

whites during his first tour to

South Africa this week. **Page 18**

Defensive Santer

Jacques Santer threw up a defen-

sive wall around his European

Commission and vowed to stay in

office even if a majority of the Eu-

ropean Parliament votes to sack the

executive. **Page 19**

Weather by Fax

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THE TIMES

2

INSIDE SECTION

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EUROPE

Bronwen Maddox sees no easy route to car market

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ARTS

Will the real Salvador Dali ever stand up?

PAGES 36-39

SPORT

Gooch emphasises need for players to make sacrifices

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TELEVISION AND RADIO Pages 50, 51

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY JANUARY 7 1999

One-day jump is biggest for months

Shares surge to close near record high

By ALASDAIR MURRAY AND OLIVER AUGUST

THE London stock market surged close to a record high yesterday as international markets extended their new year rally.

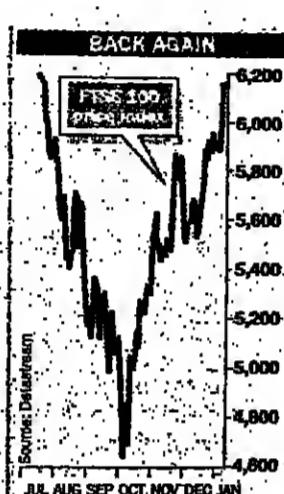
The FTSE 100 index climbed 100.6 points, or 3.2 per cent, to 3,148.8, the highest close since last July. It was the largest one-day gain since October and left the market just shy of the all-time high set on July 20.

Shares advanced despite uncertainty over the outcome of the two-day Monetary Policy Committee meeting which concludes today, with an announcement on interest rates due at midday.

Almost 1.5 billion shares were traded, well ahead of the recent daily average, as investors returned to the market apparently happy that there were no gremlins following the euro conversion week. The banking and telecoms sectors again led the market higher, as institutional investors vied to place a wall of cash in sectors expected to be the centre of merger activity.

On Wall Street the Dow Jones industrial average moved into record territory, while the main European markets also enjoyed substantial gains to close near their all-time peaks. The Dow soared about 200 points in late trading to clear 9,500 points for the first time. The Nasdaq composite and the Standard & Poor's 500 index also breached records.

The market was buoyed by



money flooding in from investors who redirect funds in the new US tax year. Strategists also suggested that uncertainty in emerging markets has sent American investors switching back to domestic stocks.

Robert Prochlich, chief strategist at Scudder Kemper Investments, said: "This isn't about earnings, it's about dodging a slowdown in the global economy."

The biggest risers included

many technology companies,

helped by the retail interest in the Internet. Microsoft saw

one of the biggest gains.

European markets also made healthy gains on the third day of euro trading. The Dax index in Frankfurt rose

more than 3 per cent to reach

its highest level since August, while shares in Paris climbed

2.24 per cent. The pound also

made modest gains yesterday despite a weaker than expected service sector survey by the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS). The euro weakened against the pound falling from 71.19p to 70.77p, while on its trade-weighted index sterling closed up 0.5 at 99.2.

The CIPS business activity index fell pointing to a contraction in the service sector for the second month running. New business orders continued to fall, although at a slightly slower rate than in November, with only the computing and IT sector registering significant growth in business.

The employment index also slipped to 49.8, indicating the first decline since the survey began.

Price pressures continued with prices falling at their fastest rate for more than two years. Peter Thomson, director-general of the CIPS, said: "This survey represents a depressing start to 1999 and no doubt exerts further pressure on the MPC to cut interest rates."

However, the City is divided on whether the Bank will act today or pause until it has seen the Christmas season retail figures and the first estimate of fourth-quarter GDP.

Neil Parker, UK economist at Royal Bank of Scotland, said: "With data continuing to indicate a slight reversal in UK economic fortunes, we think the bank will wait for more data before acting."

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Electricity firm limits bug staff

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

LONDON ELECTRICITY will have just 15 additional staff on standby when the clocks strike midnight to herald the new millennium — despite fears of widespread computer failure.

The company, which has two million customers and serves the crucial sites of the Millennium Dome and Trafalgar Square, normally has 30 staff on standby for emergencies.

It claims there is little risk of failure within its business because of minimal use of time-sensitive equipment. As a precautionary measure it will locate standby staff overnight at selected electricity sub-stations.

The stations, which were at 835p before last March's profit warning, closed at 524p, up from 533p. Other retailers, including Marks & Spencer, Liberty and Debenhams, also saw their shares rise.

The only black spot for Next was 2.5 per cent fall in its Directory sales. This was attributed in part to increased competition in catalogue retailing from the likes of Marks & Spencer and Arcadia.

Problems afflicting other clothing retailers were highlighted by the British Retail Consortium's shop price index for December, which showed prices 0.6 per cent lower year-on-year, and which pointed to discounting of clothes before Christmas as one reason for

the fall. Many clothing retailers, excluding Next, started their winter sales a week or so early, worried by poor trade.

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The clothing retailer, which fell from its pedestal last March when it issued a surprise profits warning, was being lauded by analysts again after saying that its high street sales in the five months to Christmas Eve were 13.5 per cent higher on 11 per cent more space. In the eight weeks running up to Christmas, sales were up 17 per cent.

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The shares, which were at 835p before last March's profit warning, closed at 524

New year, same old market. How can the members of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee concentrate on warding off the threat of a deep recession when stock market investors are busy pushing the FTSE 100 within touching distance of its all-time high? The international financial crisis last autumn now seems a distant bad memory; the accelerating downturn in the domestic economy a figment of bearish imaginations.

Institutional investors who shied away from shares during the run-up to euro trading are now desperate for exposure to what is becoming another record-breaking rally. Never mind the fundamentals, they do not want to miss the fun. Rarely has the distance between the stock market and the Old Lady seemed so far.

The Bank has boarded a rate-cutting cycle that the market believes will soon take rates down to levels not seen since the 1960s. Inflation control remains the official target but it is clear that the MPC has more than half an eye on vanishing growth prospects. As the Chartered Institute of Purchasing Surveyors' December service sector report revealed yesterday, growth has even disappeared from the previously robust service sector, which now appears well on the way to its own technical recession. The tight labour market conditions that worried

the Bank for much of last year have been replaced by job losses.

Only the consumer apparently stands between the Bank and another half-point rate cut today. Expenditure on items such as mobile phones has stormed ahead — an important sectoral factor behind the FTSE's sharp rise yesterday. Even the performance in the high street, though poor, may prove to have been not as dire as some gloom-merchants had predicted. Next, the clothing group turned in a robust trading statement yesterday, albeit from a low base. Retailers musing about their pre-Christmas sales have become as permanent a fixture of the season as mince pie and mistletoe. The stock market, in contrast, appears determined to ignore it.

Wolfson goes in for panel-beating

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale is a leading member of Business for Sterling, an organisation that wishes to protect a venerable British institution, namely the pound, from being rendered extinct by the onward march of Europe. Yet in his attack on the Takeover Panel, the GUS chairman appears ready to mortally damage another venerable British institution which has its own problems resisting the deathly embrace of Europe.

And why? To prove that he was not merely overgenerous in paying £1.9 billion for Argos, but that he was duped by a combination of Schroders and Stuart Rose, who is now battling to save another British institution, Booker. The famous one-eyed Albanian could have told GUS that Argos's Dutch business was virtually worthless but, apparently, GUS and its advisers chose to base their valuation on the rather more optimistic views of Argos and its advisers.

Wolfson argues that the panel was wrong not to uphold the original complaint that GUS made against Argos and Schroders. He appealed to the executive of the panel, a 15-strong body headed by Alistair Defriez, the director-general, who is on secondment from Warburg Dillon Read, and 11 other members on secondment from City firms. The executive

threw out the appeal. However, Wolfson was not satisfied, and appealed to the full Takeover Panel on the basis that Mr Defriez was in a similar position to Lord Hoffman in deciding the fate of General Pinochet, since Warburg Dillon Read was Argos's broker. The panel has accepted this appeal out of a sense of fair play. Whether or not it now grants Lord Wolfson the public rebuke of his opponents that he seeks, it has entered dangerous territory.

First, if Defriez could be said to have had one conflict of interest, he actually had two. Warburg is also GUS's financial adviser. But stood aside on the Argos bid because of his relationship with the target company.

Secondly, and more importantly, this challenge assumes that a professional on secondment to a self-regulatory organisation cannot be trusted to act independently. This destroys the principle on which the panel has worked for

sure, then the risk is that chief executives will be pushed towards taking outside advice. Such second guessing is not only expensive but damaging to trust within an organisation.

The going on at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management were extraordinary. Those who failed to prevent Peter Young's antics may have deserved to lose their jobs. Yet those taking responsible positions in the City may think more than twice before laying themselves open to the costs of the legal battles that Mr Percy and his colleagues faced. In the professions, people usually enjoy the benefits of professional indemnity insurance. On the Percy precedent, fund managers may soon come under pressure to offer similar comfort to their top people.

Victor's gambit

VICTOR RICE failed to persuade shareholders of LucasVarity that he should be allowed to move the company's base to the United States, conveniently close to his home. But he is a man of immense determination, not to be outdone by a bare majority of investors. He now admits that he is intent on exploring deals that will enhance the future for the company, whether by joint venture, merger or acquisition. The chances that these explorations might stretch into euroland, instead of the US, seem slight.

COMMENTARY

by our City Editor



Taking flight: BA revenue has suffered because of fewer premium class passengers, lured by competitive rival airlines

BA feels the pressure as competition bites

By CARL MORTISHER, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

CUT-THROAT competition for first class and business passengers is hurting British Airways, and forced the airline to warn investors yesterday that weakness in its forward order book was putting pressure on revenues.

The airline suffered a decline in premium traffic in spite of overall growth in passenger volumes. The company said it was too early to comment on 1999 bookings but took the unusual step of warning that forward bookings point to a continuing softness in the market, particularly in premium traffic. This is putting heavy pressure on yields.

Traffic figures for December show that BA is getting its share of overall air traffic growth with a 10.5 per cent

rise in revenue passenger kilometres. However it carried almost 4 per cent fewer first and club class passengers.

Air transport analysts reckon that the industry earns as much as 30 per cent of its income from 5 per cent of passengers, those at the front end of the aircraft.

BA yesterday added to investors' misery by revealing that profits for the third quarter to December would be hit by the strength of the yen. The company has Y127 billion (£688 million) in uncovered Japanese debt to finance aircraft leases.

Leasing in Japan carries tax and low interest advantages but an 18 per cent fall in sterling against the yen will increase the interest charge on the loans. While current cash-

flow is unaffected, BA is forced to take a £117 million charge to its third-quarter profits.

Analysts were bemused yesterday by the sight of BA shares drifting upwards with the market.

BA has enlisted its entire workforce in an attempt to claw back premium class passengers lured by rival airlines.

Even cabin crews have been recruited into battle and added to call on small firms and deliver the BA sales pitch.

A spokesman for the company said that BA had reshaped its aircraft order book, cancelling 747s and replacing them with 777s in line with the new strategy. The latter aircraft will have a smaller proportion of economy seats.

BA confirmed yesterday

Tempus, page 30

that it was in talks with JAL which could lead to the Japanese airline joining BA's One-World Alliance. A spokesman said that no decision had been made but links in the form of code-sharing and frequent-flyer programmes could be on the agenda.

BA already has a link with ANA, JAL's rival, which manages BA's frequent-flyer programme for Japanese customers. However, ANA has announced plans to join the rival Star Alliance with Lufthansa.

The move by ANA has forced BA to seek a different partner. The British airline has been keen to find a partner in Japan which accounts for the bulk of air traffic in East Asia.

By FRASER NELSON

ALLIED CARPETS' takeover talks ended in acrimony yesterday as Alchemy, the venture capitalist that had been interested in buying the carpet retailer, alleged that it had not been given enough information by Allied's management to allow it to make a formal bid.

Allied, which was first approached by Alchemy in mid-September, said that "after extensive reviews of the business and despite full co-operation from the management", no formal bid had emerged.

Alchemy, which was first approached by Alchemy in mid-September, said that "after extensive reviews of the business and despite full co-operation from the management", no formal bid had emerged.

Jon Moulton, Alchemy's managing partner, said that this was "a fairly vigorous overstatement", and complained that Allied had made "talks go at a snail's pace". Mr Moulton said: "We never made an offer because we've always wanted to know the solid

ity of its financial position first." Alchemy countered that it had given Alchemy all necessary financial details, and complained that Alchemy had now breached its confidentiality agreement.

Allied, which parted company with its finance director and its head of retail operations last year after accounting irregularities were uncovered, said that it had been in talks with more than one possible buyer. The sale of its Carpetland stores to Carpetright, its main rival, for £12 million is to be completed on Monday.

Allied shares yesterday slipped 7p to 41p, near to its low. They were trading at 32p two years ago.

Julian Lee, Allied's chairman, said that it wanted to focus on improving its sales and cutting its overhead costs.

Mr Corlett and three other directors own 7.25 per cent of the shares and will collect

£660,000 between them. Last year, the dividend brought them £434,000 each.

Martin Towers, who has now replaced Gerald Wightman as finance director, said: "We don't see the pay cuts as a big deal. This is not a fat-cat company; we know how difficult trading conditions are and we simply don't think we could justify a pay rise in these conditions."

The City was relieved there were no further shocks in the results, and the shares added 4p to 11p.

After the property disposal sales, pre-tax profits were £16.5 million (£16.3 million) and earnings were 18.7p (16.6p) a share. The dividend is 12.85p (9.1p) with a final 10p due on April 6.

Tempus, page 30

Alley Textiles directors opt to sacrifice pay rise

By FRASER NELSON

THE nine directors of Allied Textiles are to forego a pay rise after presiding over its sharpest revenue decline since 1980.

John Corlett, who gave up an attempt to take the Yorkshire clothemaker private last year, said the entire board has refused a pay rise averaging 5 per cent.

The decision came as Allied confirmed that its turnover dropped by 11 per cent over the year to £207 million after a disastrous performance from its woolen textiles.

However, Mr Corlett will receive £253,000 from the generous 52 per cent increase in dividend that the company decided to pay from the £4.8 million profit on property disposals.

Mr Corlett and three other directors own 7.25 per cent of the shares and will collect

BP moves advertising account

By FRASER NELSON

LORD WOLFSON, chairman of Great Universal Stores, has won an appeal to challenge the structure of the Takeover Panel in a final attempt to prove he was misled during his company's £1.9 billion bid for Argos (See Commentary, this page).

His case centres on accusations that Alistair Defriez, director-general of the Takeover Panel, should not have handled an initial appeal by GUS because he is on secondment from Warburg Dillon Read, which acted as adviser to GUS.

If the latest appeal is successful, it would rewrite the 30-year-old structure of the Takeover Panel, which is staffed by directors on secondment from the City.

Lord Wolfson, whose case has already been rejected by the Takeover Panel twice, is invoking what his advisers will describe as the "Pinochet Principle"

because of the conflict of interest. GUS said: "This is the fundamental right against bias — exactly the same principle as the Pinochet case. The panel have rejected us twice, and their director-general will be going back to work for Argos's adviser."

Mr Defriez said: "The idea



Wolfson: Pinochet Principle

that Takeover Panel members sit and argue cases from the viewpoints of their financial institutions is, in my opinion, a load of nonsense but that's by-the-by."

"GUS has appealed, and we will hear it because we uphold fairness and fair play."

Lord Wolfson particularly takes issue with a footnote on Argos's main defence document of April 3 saying: "Five stores were opened in Holland and initial sales are above expectations."

GUS says it has documents which prove that, on March 28, Argos knew that the stores were trading 11 per cent below expectations. It also claims Argos gave a misleading Easter trading statement. The former advisers to Argos reject all these claims.

Sir David Calcutt, chairman of the panel, will consider Lord Wolfson's claims with nine other executives.

SATURDAY. ANYTHING BUT A DAY OF REST.

SPORT

Vision

WEEKEND

metro

the times magazine

meg@

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL STABY

Telewest investor fulfils City's dream criteria

BUYING at the bottom and selling at the top is the ultimate ambition for every City investor. So, full marks to the institution that decided to cash in its chips by selling a near 12 per cent stake in high-flying Telewest in a deal worth £444 million.

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, acquired 253.76 million shares at a heavily discounted 175p as part of a bought deal when the ruling price was steady at the 205p level. They were later sold on to various institutions.

At the last count Cor-Communications held 12 per cent of Telewest and was known to be a seller. Tel-Communications, currently being bid for by AT&T Corporation, holds a further 21.6 per cent.

Telewest has soared from a low of 64p during the past year and gained status as a constituent of the top 100 companies. This was all achieved without the company making a penny profit, such is the strength of the sector.

Elsewhere in the sector, Colt Telecom climbed 87p to 511.24p on reports that NTL in the US wanted to bid. Vodafone retreated 21p to £10.89 as investors pondered the proposed £60 billion merger with AirTouch Communications, while Cable & Wireless celebrated strong growth among its mobile phone customers with a jump of 69p to 848p. Orange continued to build on its growing customer base with a rise of 80p to 908p.

Glancing into a crystal ball, traders in the futures pit have concluded that share prices generally will hit a record high this morning. The FTSE 100 index March future closed at 6,200. That compares with the previous best of 6,179.0 achieved on July 20, last year.

The cash market came close to it in hectic trading yesterday as London followed the lead of Wall Street and markets in the Far East and Europe.

The index closed near its best of the day with a leap of 190.6 to 6,143.8. Hopes of fresh corporate activity combined with buying of many of the old favourites to squeeze shorts higher in a marketplace short of stock.

Some of the ratings among leading shares now look plain daft, but with hopes still high that interest rates will be cut again today, investors shrewdly turn to the total turn-



Peter George, left, chief executive, and Brian Wallace, finance director of Ladbroke, which added 16p to 248p

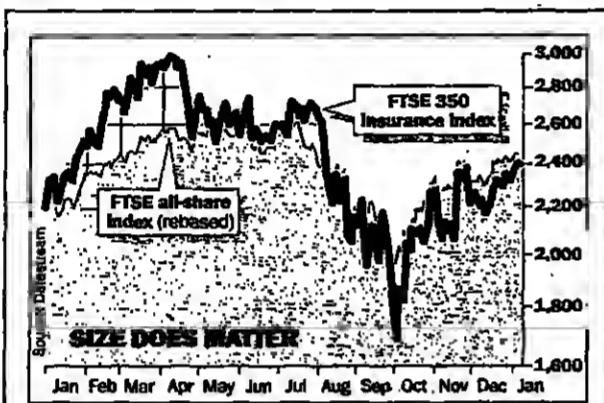
over of 1.47 billion was bolstered by the Telewest placing.

One of the few dull spots was Lsmo, down 8p to a five-year low of 92p. Brokers say it reflects the deteriorating oil price, but the speculators maintain that Lsmo is looking vulnerable to a bid.

Albright & Wilson, 1p easier at 63p, is also likely to come under the hammer this morning.

ing after issuing a gloomy trading statement after the official close of business last night.

Ladbroke has plenty of admirers, with the price advancing 16p to 248p. Dresdner Kleinwort Benson has included it as one of its top five European picks for 1999. Credit Suisse First Boston has also been pushing the shares as one of its selections for 1999.



LEHMAN BROTHERS, the US securities house, is optimistic about the outlook for the insurance sector in 1999 and is urging clients to "think big".

Michael Lindsay, at Lehman, has upgraded recommendations for eight companies and reduced on a further two.

Top of his shopping list among the British companies is Allied Zurich, up 36p to 998p, and Royal & SunAlliance, 31p dearer at 548p. BT Alex Brown also rates RSA a "buy".

The Allied Zurich management is looking for long-term earnings growth of 15 per cent. Mr Lindsay says this appears realistic given the business mix.

RSA is seen as undervalued after a disastrous 1998. But, the "group" needs to achieve a better return on equity.

CGU, 50p better at 979p, has been lifted from "neutral" to "outperform" with Lehman claiming the management is capable of restoring non-life profitability.

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Some of the ratings among leading shares now look plain daft, but with hopes still high that interest rates will be cut again today, investors shrewdly turn to the total turn-

Major cities

	New York (midday)
US Doms	1462.07 (+15.85)
S&P Composite	1255.20 (+21.42)
Tokyo	
Nikkei Average	13485.45 (+235.72)
Amsterdam	
AXP Int'l	553.66 (+17.15)
Sydney	
AU	2555.4 (+37.6)
Frankfurt	
DAX	5443.82 (+185.71)
Singapore	
Sgt	14045.71 (+78.72)
Brussels	
Euro	3581.82 (+2.22)
Paris	
CAC-40	3241.2 (+94.0)
Zurich	
SWX Gen	1447.92 (+28.22)
London	
FT 30	3629.1 (+174.42)
FTSE 100	5148.2 (+129.28)
FTSE 250	3844.4 (+127.21)
FTSE 350	3885.6 (+27.21)
FTSE Euroex 100	2924.12 (+45.55)
FTSE All-Share	2718.11 (+77.22)
FTSE Non Financials	2838.55 (+59.38)
FTSE Food Int'l	157.58 (-0.17)
FTSE Govt Secs	115.15 (+0.05)
FTSE 100 Volatility	147.0m
SEAO Volatility	30.97m
SEAO Volume	15,580 (+0.0005)
Euro	0.7077 (+0.0042)
Exchange Index	98.2 (+2.67)
FTSE 100 Index (Official Data 1998)	1,1688
FTSE 100 (20.0 Jan 1997-100)	154.4 (20.0 Jan 1997-100)
FTSE 100 (20.0 May 1997-100)	162.0 (20.0 May 1997-100)

Source: Eikon

Recent support for Energia, down 175p to 153.5, has also been good news for National Grid, its parent, 204p better at 510p. HSBC Securities, the broker, has reiterated its "buy" rating for shares of the latter.

Norwich Union rose 26p to 450p as ST Alex Brown, the broker, moved from "market perform" to "buy".

News of a bid approach lifted Avonide 10p to 50p. City speculators claim household Bryant, up 42p to 88p, is the most likely suitor.

Share buying by one director was responsible for a rise of 9p to 211p in Oxford Instruments. Sir Martin Wood, deputy chairman, has bought 125,000 shares at 204p. It takes his total holding to 2.67 million, or 5.6 per cent.

Dentaster held steady at 53p despite Steve Laughton, managing director, unloading a parcel of 500,000 shares at the 49p level. It reduces his holding in the company to 49,708, or less than 1 per cent.

David Abel has been picking up more shares in Jourdan, steady at 444p, where he is chairman. He has bought a total of 75,000 shares at prices between 42p and 44p. It takes his holding to 5.7 million shares, 15.73 per cent.

Tadpole Technology stood out with a rise of 134p to 10p ahead of final results due out soon. Brokers say the results will be accompanied by news that the group has signed up more big customers for its Java software system.

Profit taking left United Carriers 12p down to 294p. The shares were chased higher recently by the news that former stockbroker and pizzaman Luke Johnson had built up a 7 per cent stake.

In the future pits, the March series of the long gilt finished down 9p at £119.16 on turnover of 19 million contracts. In longs, Treasury 7 per cent 2002, firms 4p to £107.53, while Treasury 8 per cent 2002 shed 5p at £151.08.

■ **NEW YORK:** US shares moved to record highs as investors piled into blue chips. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 150.98 points to 9,462.07.

■ **ALLIED TEXTILES:** NOTHING is going right for BA at the moment. The airline industry has finally realised that it matters not if you have the biggest market share when your market consists of backpackers, package tourists and economic migrants.

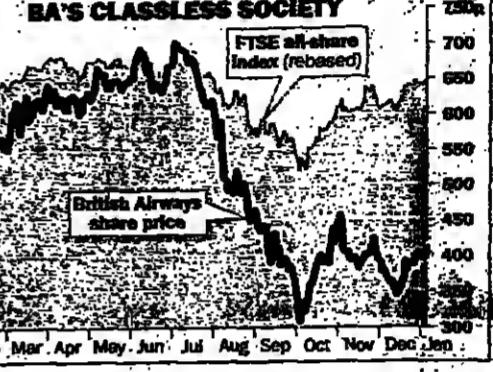
BA is waging war to protect its first and club class passengers and is being forced to offer discounts to keep the crowds of large multinationals. However, there is less business about. For example, BA Amoco has recently cut its travel budget, forcing the jet-setting oilmen to do business back at base using phones, e-mail and videoconferencing instead of in the first class lounge. Other firms are doing likewise.

BA no doubt hopes this is a temporary blip and normal corporate extravagance will resume. But it firms discover

that business can be done without jet lag and an expensive night in a hotel, they may be slow to resume flying.

Nonetheless, traffic in Asia is beginning to lift from its nadir and BA needs a Japanese partner. The ideal candidate, ANA, has apparently plumped for the rival grouping Star; a curious decision given ANA's existing link with BA over the

latter's Air Miles programme. ANA is the bigger player on Japan's domestic routes and BA would have benefited from feeding ANA's passengers from across Japan on to BA flights. However, that price appears to have gone to Britishair, and BA will now have to build a new relationship with ANA. The shares are best left alone.



least, expect some more generous dividends which have compensated many board members for the noble decision to forego a pay rise last year.

No one in West Yorkshire, or anywhere else in Britain, has had fun spinning any form of yarn in the past 12 months, but Allied seems to have been weathering the turbulent market conditions with its balance sheet intact.

Astonishingly, it has done best selling carpets at a time when UK carpet retailers are battling against the worst conditions in memory.

It has done this by selling to Germany and Belgium, which now account for 15 per cent of its profits.

Only woolen fibres have suffered the kind of profits collapse the City feared. Synthetic fibres declined by 6.6 per cent.

Add to this further scope for property disposals and shareholders can, at the very

least, still not had much effect on confidence.

The construction arm has stopped chasing business for its own sake and Oliver Whitehead, chief executive, said the housing arm has not fallen into the trap of continuing market share with profits during the woes of imminent recession that clouded the latter half of 1998.

The land bank was tweaked last year after the purchase of Hassall in 1997 left McAlpine with sites it did not want. The group now says it has a better mix of locations, with higher potential margins.

McAlpine sensibly sold its US aggregates and civil engineering interests to Hanson last October, taking advantage of the boom in US road building to secure an alternative price for its assets.

After that deal Tempus identified the upside to the shares, which then stood at about 130p. Their progress since should continue.

	LEHMAN BROTHERS	ALLIED TEXTILES
COFFEE	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100%	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100)	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100)	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l Int'l Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
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COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (100) Int'l	101.20	101.20
COFFEE 100% (100) Int'l (1		

Body Shop appoints Murray

Body Shop, the cosmetics group, has given its management team another shake-up with the appointment of a new finance director. Alastair Murray joins the company from PIC International where he was finance director of its food ingredients arm for four years.

The move follows the appointment last year of Frenchman Patrick Gouraud as chief executive, replacing co-founder Anita Roddick, who became co-chairman alongside Gordon, her husband.

Jeremy Kett, the group's current finance director, will become head of corporate finance and remain on the main board until May, when the company announces its final results.

BWI to go private
Managers of BWI, the supplier of processing and packaging equipment for consumer industries, are hoping to take the company private. The company said yesterday it had received a number of approaches, including one from an MBO team. The announcement lifted BWI shares 22½p to 69p, valuing the company at about £32 million. Only last year BWI completed the \$69 million (£42 million) purchase of RA Jones, a US competitor. The company's main shareholders include PPFM, which has 17 per cent of the shares.

Avonside bid
Avonside Group, which provides services to the building industry, admitted yesterday that it had received an approach that may lead to a takeover. The company's shares climbed 7½p to 47½p, which capitalises the company at about £19 million. Interim results for the current year showed a rise in pre-tax profits to £1.7 million from £1 million.

Avonmore boost
Avonmore Waterford, the food manufacturer based in the Republic of Ireland, is investing £40.82 million (£28.8 million) in operations in America and Britain. In the UK the company is expanding its Cuisine Foodservice business at Tamworth, Staffordshire, to include fresh meats.

Government threat sees creation of semiconductor giant

By CARL MORTISHED
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

TWO giants of the South Korean electronics sector have agreed to merge their semiconductor businesses after threats from the Government forced LG to drop its opposition to a virtual takeover of its operation by Hyundai.

LG Group said yesterday that it would merge its chip unit with its opposite number at Hyundai and said that it would not be taking a stake in the new company.

The combined group will be one of top three producers of

memory chips globally, alongside Japan's NEC and Samsung also of South Korea. However, it could encounter opposition from competition authorities as the merger will reinforce South Korea's control over some 40 per cent of the market in DRAM chips.

Siemens, which last summer announced the closure of its Tyneside plant with the loss of 1,100 jobs, has blamed South Korea for the precipitous fall in chip prices.

The merger of LG Semicon with Hyundai Electronic Industries is likely to force a decision on the future of large investments in Scotland and

Wales. Both companies have invested heavily in new memory chip plants in Britain, though Hyundai's plant in Dunfermline has been mothballed and completion of the LG Semicon facility in Wales has been in doubt because of the catastrophic plunge in the price of semiconductors.

The South Korean Government has been pushing its debt-strapped conglomerates to consolidate their interests in a market suffering huge overcapacity and an initial 70/30 split was agreed in September but the two companies fell out over the issue of control. Arthur D. Little, the manage-

ment consultancy, was appointed to advise on the structure of the group and recommended that Hyundai take the lead. LG initially refused to cooperate and threatened to sue the consultants.

However, the South Korean Government stepped up the pressure on the debt-strapped LG by threatening to use its influence over South Korea's banks to call in loans. The electronics group owes over \$6 billion (£3.6 billion), mainly to domestic banks.

The merged group will be saddled with about \$9.5 billion in debt but Hyundai said yesterday it would be seeking to the stump, claiming 500 jobs.

Eisner's Disney pay is almost halved

By CARL MORTISHED
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

WALT DISNEY, hit by an overall slowdown last year and a dismal fourth quarter, cut the salary and bonus of Michael Eisner, its chief executive, by almost half, to \$5.5 million (£3.5 million), last year.

Mr Eisner last year received a base salary of \$764,423 and a bonus of \$5 million. In 1997 he was paid a salary of \$750,000 and a bonus of \$9.9 million.

Forbes Magazine last September estimated that Mr Eisner was worth \$710 million, based on stock options, bonuses and other perks. Disney and Mr Eisner have come under criticism for his lucrative pay package.

Disney's 1998 financial year, which ended last September, was weak compared with previous years, with net profits rising just 4 per cent to \$1.9 billion, on a 6 per cent gain in revenues. The entertainment group was hurt by the Asian meltdown, and its film studios suffered from box-office losses and weak video sales. Also, its ABC television network had low ratings.

In November, Disney reported a 28 per cent drop in fourth-quarter net income as poorly performing films, disappointing video sales and other problems held back earnings.

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KP Crisps to shed 250 jobs at Billingham

By SAEED SHAH

KP CRISPS yesterday announced that 250 workers will lose their jobs at its Teesside factory due to restructuring required to cope with the highly competitive UK crisps market.

The plant at Billingham, which makes the McCoys and Brannigans brands, has suffered as result of changing consumer tastes and lack of promotion by KP, which is owned by United Biscuits. The redundancies will leave 1,350 workers at the site.

The humble fried potato, or crisp, the staple of children's lunchboxes for decades, has lost out to new savoury snacking trends, said Rob Mears, sales director at KP Crisps.

He said: "Crisps have been the engine of growth but UK consumers have become more discerning."

Michael Landymore, food analyst at Henderson Crosthwaite, said: "The market is flat as a pancake and there is too much capacity. KP Crisps has lost out to the likes of Walkers who have put more money behind marketing."

According to Snacka, the snack industry association, the UK crisps market was worth £1.1 billion in 1997 and savoury snacks as a whole is now valued at £2 billion, of which KP Foods has 21 per cent and Walkers Snack Foods takes 45 per cent.



Thierry Demarest, right, with Francois Cornelis, of Petrofina, when the takeover was announced

Total lifts earnings forecast

By CARL MORTISHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

THIERRY DESMAREST, chairman of Total, has increased his forecast of the earnings boost from the oil group's takeover of Petrofina, its Belgian rival.

M Demarest, who has been on a charm offensive designed to woo sceptical financial analysts and investors over the Petrofina deal, said that earnings would rise up to 15 per cent as a result of the

takeover, up five points from his previous forecasts.

He also revealed that Total's 1998 net profit would be just 10 per cent below the previous year's total of £1.16 billion (£230 million), in spite of a 30 per cent slide in the oil price. M Demarest said that the result was a markedly better performance than expected from Anglo-Saxon oil groups.

The merged Total Fina will have production capacity of 1.5 million barrels per day by 2005 compared with Total's current production of 800,000 barrels per day.

Mr Demarest forecast that the merged group's return on assets would be one percentage point higher by 2003, ranging from 13 to 17 per cent on oil price expectations of \$13 to \$15 per barrel.

Systems set to recognise pecking order

THERE has always been something rather egalitarian about computers in the workplace. If a corporate network breaks down — or, more commonly, slows down — everyone suffers equally.

Not any more. A deal to be announced today between Microsoft, Cisco Systems and Compagny will allow IT directors to decide which employees deserve to have the fastest access to a corporate network.

Obviously, this is bad news for anyone at the bottom of the food chain in any large organisation, but it could help companies to use their IT systems in a far more efficient way.

Phil Smith, Cisco's business development director, is typically euphemistic.

"What you actually do is give a base level of service to everyone," he says. "And then on top of that give a premium service to those who need it most."

There are many practical examples of why such technology can be useful. Any company's accounts department would benefit enormously from extra network capacity — or bandwidth, as IT people call it — at the end of the financial year. This would allow their computers to work faster to complete accounts on time, and reduce the risk of a network crash.

It may be annoying for those in another department — say personnel — to suffer at the expense of accounts. However, the situation could be reversed at different times of the year, for example, during early autumn when lots of graduates are being recruited.

The consortium of companies behind the technology calls it a "policy-based system". It is also known as a "directory-enabled system" because it learns the identities — and therefore importance — of all a company's employees. In an international organisation, an employee could log on to a terminal in any country and always be

given the same amount of bandwidth.

Another advantage to the system is that it allows employees to book extra bandwidth in advance. This could be useful for video conferences, which require enormous amounts of network capacity.

Companies that conduct a lot of business online — such as City brokers — could also find the system useful. They can simply allocate more bandwidth to their most lucrative clients, thus making sure that all their deals are prioritised and go through their computer systems first.

As Mr Smith says: "Networks will become more discerning — channelling power where it is required, but with sufficient deftness to apply privileges to individuals. That translates into a greater return on investment from the network."

As with most modern IT systems, it is also brutally easy to erase people from the system if they are sacked. "Access privileges can be easily terminated with a click of a mouse," Mr Smith says.

□ THE Ritz-Carlton is considering hiring "technology butlers" for its US and European hotels after the success of a trial at its Kuala Lumpur property. The butlers were hired to cope with the high-tech demands of travelling executives, and can help to solve problems ranging from jammed fax machines to malfunctioning laptops.

□ JOHN HAINES, a founder director of Ionical, the wireless telephone company that went into administration last year, has joined TTP Communications, a Cambridge supplier of technology for mobile phones. He will run the division of TTP responsible for UMTS, the next-generation standard of mobile communications that will allow mobile phones to access the Internet at high speeds.

CHRIS AYRES

Self-assessment's human cost

By FRANK HASKEW AND FRANCESCA LAGERBERG



Form-filling has been a great stress for some, say Francesca Lagerberg and Frank Haskew

TAXPAYERS who have yet to submit their 1998 income tax returns are now under pressure to file it before the January 31 deadline, or face the automatic £100 penalty. The latest figures show that four million tax returns (nearly half the expected number for the year) have still to be filed. Many of these returns will probably make it to the Inland Revenue on time, particularly those in the hands of professional advisers. However, for the unrepresented, self-assessment is still a daunting prospect.

Self-assessment is now reaching the conclusion of its second full year of operation. The Revenue has just announced the results of a public consultation on the self-assessment system. It ticked away the full findings of this consultation on its Internet home page but the results show that aside from the expected teething problems, there is still much room for improvement. One particular aspect highlighted by respondents to the consultation was the complexity of the forms that taxpayers had to complete. The worry and confusion caused to taxpayers appears at times to be completely disproportionate to the tax being collected. While the introduction of self-assessment cost £80 million, according to the Revenue, what has been the human cost?

Consider just two random examples of ordinary people who

are struggling with self-assessment. Just prior to the last self-assessment deadline a little old lady was spotted at the front of a post office queue asking to send a document by recorded delivery. She had her tax return, and was desperate to ensure that it reached the Revenue before the deadline. She was in deep conversation with the cashier, and it became clear she was a troubled lady. She had in the recent past sold her house and its contents and moved into sheltered accommodation. She did not understand the tax relating to the sale of her house, she could not find the relevant documentation and was very distressed about completing her tax return form.

The second example is of a highly numerate, retired engineer. Like most retired people on

which would sweep away many of the complexities found in the old system, producing benefits for taxpayers, or "customers" as they are now known. Taxpayers have a right to feel short-changed, because for many it has clearly failed in that aim. The main benefits appear to accrue to the Revenue, which has passed on much of its work to the taxpayer. This may have produced great cost savings for the Revenue, but left many taxpayers confused and bemused.

These two people were ordinary law-abiding senior citizens, the sort of people who would never knowingly submit an incorrect tax return. Both of them were under great stress, and it was clear that they felt let down by the tax system.

Are these two isolated experiences? Sadly it would appear not. So what has gone wrong? Self-assessment was sold to taxpayers as a clearer tax system, for example, by abolishing the schedules sys-

tem and simplifying reliefs. Instead, recent Chancellors have undertaken a course exactly opposite to this: over the past ten years, the volume of tax rules has doubled, and much of this has occurred in the past five years. Many of these unwelcome complications started when Norman Lamont attempted to disguise numerous tax increases. This trend has been continued in a most able fashion by the latest Chancellor. All indications are that it will get even worse.

The tax calculations are now so complicated that many tax professionals struggle to understand them. If they are struggling, what hope is there for the ordinary taxpayer? We suspect very little. For many ordinary taxpayers, self-assessment has resulted in a massive shift in the burden from the State to the individual. For many, that burden is now great to bear lightly. Unfortunately, unless our overloaded tax system is subject to fundamental reform designed to make it easier to understand and to calculate tax liabilities, things are unlikely to improve, and could well get much worse. Tinkering with the words is not good enough. A few years ago, a colleague described self-assessment as a "ticking time bomb which will blow up in the face of the next Government". He has a nasty habit of being proved right.

Frank Haskew and Francesca Lagerberg are tax managers with the Tax Faculty of the ICAEW.

Financial reporting needs Aussie touch

AUSTRALIANS like to make their points of view plain. Take the cricket, for example. On the opening day of the Melbourne Test, which was before a great English victory and before the Gough hat-trick had restored some dignity, it rained all day. One Melbourne paper ran a front page consisting of a huge photograph of a glum Australian batsman surveying the scene from the dressing room window. The headline read: "No Runs. No Wickets. No Play. Damn. Not A Bad Day For The English."

This is not simple pom-bashing — the press was astonishingly generous when, three days later, the English had won the match. But it is the principle that the views that you hold should be strong and that people should be in no doubt what they are.

One exponent of this is Ken Spencer. He is chairman of the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). But perhaps more importantly he is current chairman of the eccentrically titled G4+1. This group consists of representatives of the standard-setting bodies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and America. Spencer pursues his task with good Australian zeal. When the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) was railroading its financial instruments rules towards agreement just before the opening of the AASB, what he was protesting about was that the IASC needed to have its rules agreed before putting its package before IOSCO, the stock exchanges' organisation. In the hope that it will rubber stamp the IASC rules as a route towards acceptance on the world's and America's stock exchanges.

The rules were a compromise and the Australians said so. "As soon as you move away from full fair value," said Spencer, "it's a compromise and you have to write long rules to make the compromise work. We could have lived with the compromise if the rules were rigorous." But people were saying: "We don't know what this section means — we just need to get it done." So the Australians became the only member of the IASC to vote against. The UK, France and America abstained. Everyone else voted the compromise through. It can only lead to more problems ahead.

The Australians' uncompromising stance extends to other areas. And this is where the G4+1 importance comes in. There is a vacuum

at the heart of global financial reporting rules at the moment. The IASC is making a rather unconvincing bid for leadership. Continental Europeans are suspicious, quite rightly, of America's perceived dominance via its Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB). There is a great need for a body that seems to represent a wider community and one that is not exclusively powered by politics. The G4+1 currently fits that bill.

It has grown quite remarkably in influence and scope of work. And now it has released its first position paper. This deals with one of the most contentious areas around. What is known in the UK as merger accounting and around the rest of the world as pooling is monstrously flawed. As we all know, there is no such thing as a merger. There are only takeovers, regardless of the nice words said at the time. But if you claim something is a merger, and no large corporate organisation would do otherwise, then you use the pooling rules which mean that you add everything together, make no adjustments, and make few difficult charges to the reported figures.

What the G4+1 paper makes clear is that this should be booted into touch. In future, companies that "merge" should restate assets and liabilities at current values. And like big boys, they should take the hit in their financial reporting. Which is what happens in Australia, where pooling is simply not permitted.

It would be good to think that the rest of the business world would follow the G4+1 lead. But in Spencer's view, the problem is deep. "We are conceptual rather than pragmatic in our approach," he said, wearing his Australian hat. "The UK is simply pragmatic. America is conceptual in approach and then is beaten over the head by a very powerful business lobby until it turns pragmatic."

The result is that flawed financial reporting rules around the world make life much more difficult than it should be. The blunt Australian approach to life and cricket should perhaps be applied to financial reporting. "We are isolated geographically," said Spencer, "so we feel the need to be keener to participate." And there is another effect of this. "There is no point in us flying 24 hours and then sitting quietly at the meeting."

It would be good to see this attitude fade away when applied to cricket. But the financial reporting world could do with more of this blunt approach.

May's day of cricket glory

TIM MAY, the one-time Australian spin bowler, was probably the most noted accountant in the country to take to the game. These days he is chief executive officer of the Australian Cricketers' Association and he has just written his first book, which purports to be a "true-life" account of the team on tour. In it, he describes his beginnings. "I was an accountant," he said. "Accountancy is not fun. My discipline was auditing. Auditing is less fun. Then one day at an account-

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Over the Tannoy came the message: "Would Tim May please go to the foyer; your parents are on the phone. They wish to congratulate you on being picked in the Australian Cricket Team." As May triumphantly recounts: "I was now Tim May, Australian cricketer. I was no longer Tim May, Auditor. This was a significant change."

Court of Appeal

Council failed to maintain road ice-free

Goodes v East Sussex County Council

Before Lord Justice Morris, Lord Justice Aldous and Lord Justice Hutchison

Judgment December 21

A highway authority, by failing to act expeditiously to prevent ice from forming on the surface of a road, was in breach of their statutory duty to maintain it.

The Court of Appeal so held by a majority (Lord Justice Aldous dissenting) in a reserved judgment allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, Geoffrey Graham Goodes, from a decision of Judge Hargrave, QC, sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division, in favour of the defendants, East Sussex County Council.

(Mr J. G. R. Ross and Mr Richard Cawse for Mr Goodes; Mr Christopher Wilson-Smith, QC and Mr John Stevenson for the defendants).

LORD JUSTICE HUTCHISON said that on November 14, 1991, at about 7.10am, the plaintiff was driving his motor car on the A267 road between Five Ashes and Mayfield in Sussex when, as he was in the process of overtaking other vehicles on a straight stretch of road at a place known as Wellbrook Hill, his vehicle skidded on ice on the road surface and left the road.

The plaintiff, who sustained injuries of the utmost severity in the accident, brought proceedings against the defendants, the highway authority responsible for the

repair and maintenance of the road, alleging that they were responsible by reason of their failure to maintain the road by keeping it free from ice.

The central issue before the judge, who said that he could find no want of care in the plaintiff's driving, was whether the defendants had been shown to be in breach of their statutory duty to maintain the road.

That duty was imposed by section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 which provided:

"The authority, who are for the time being the highway authority for a highway maintainable at the public expense are under a duty — to maintain the highway."

Section 23 of the 1980 Act provided:

"Maintenance includes repair and maintenance and 'maintainable' are to be construed accordingly."

Section 50(1) of the Act provided that in an action for damages arising out of the authority's failure to maintain it:

"It is a defence ... to prove that the authority had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic."

The defendants had pleaded a section 50 defence but it was abandoned in the course of the trial.

At 11.45pm on November 13 Mr Hargrave, the defendants' area highway superintendent for West Sussex Division, received from the Southampton Weather Centre over the telephone a weather forecast

which contained a warning of frost. In response to that message Mr Hargrave, having discussed the matter with Mr Luff, the deputy divisional engineer, arranged for the roads to be pre-salted, starting at 5.30am.

Pre-salting was intended to prevent the formation of ice on the road surface rather than to dispense with it.

It was common ground that the duty that covered the network of road which included Wellbrook Hill on Mr Hargrave's instruction was to maintain the road within 15 minutes of its occurrence.

The most recent authoritative review of the law relating to the liability of a highway authority under section 41 was to be found in *Cross v Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council* [1998] 1 All ER 564.

The real thrust of the plaintiff's case was that there had been a failure to prevent the formation of ice which was ample cause for an emergency measure.

His Lordship said that even Mr Hargrave and Mr Luff had decided that the forecast conditions were such as to necessitate pre-salting.

There was an escape from the conclusion that logic and the proper performance of their duty to maintain the highway dictated that the gritting vehicles should be ordered out at such a time that they would be able to complete their rounds by the time the frost was sufficient to give rise to a real risk of dangerous patches on the roads.

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Songs in the off-key of life

NEW MOVIES: James Christopher sees Michael Caine give the performance of his life and Jane Horrocks charm for England in the stunning *Little Voice*

If cinema is the stuff of dreams, then *Little Voice* is a cruel warning that dreams only come true for the chosen few. Based on Jim Cartwright's 1992 theatrical smash, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, Mark Herman's comedy exploits the gung-ho lives of Scarborough's down-at-heels whose only hope of escape is the lottery or showbiz stardom.

That Herman pulls this off with as much flair as his other notable Yorkshire success, *Brassed Off*, is largely due to Michael Caine's unsavoury Ray Say, a talent scout at the per end of a negligible career. It is a moment as telling as any Biblical conversion. Say makes the first genuine discovery of his life while under the guiding hand of Brenda Blethyn's spectacularly vulgar wife, Marlene. Grappling with her bulging tights, Say suddenly hears Marlene's chronically shy daughter, LV, sing one-perfect impersonations of Shirley Bassey, Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe. Say raises his beached eyes to heaven and the big time. But, however much he tries to put LV on the road to glory, by way of Mr Bo's nightclub, crippling stage fright — the inheritance of LV's gaudy family life — wrecks their chances.

Part fairytale, part musical comedy and teenage romance, *Little Voice* is a wonderfully giddy antidote to the 42nd Street fantasy of the chorus girl who takes over the lead role for one night and walks of a star. Here the dash for stardom is simply dashed. But there are hefty compensations, not least Jane Horrocks's ability to turn LV's gawky waif into aorchid song diva.

Caine, however, steals the film. Cruising the streets of Scarborough in a bright red Chevy, gold medallion and a truly horrific collection of Flavio shirts, Caine, the Joe Bigler of Hollywood heavyweights, hasn't looked so perfectly in his element in years. Whether promoting saggy-breasted strippers or over-weight male dance acts who wobble along to music, 'Say' keeps you guessing as to how seriously he believes in the preposterous sense of his own glamour. Having carved a career from dreary, deadpan variations on villains and cockney bairns, Caine at last gets to make a jambalaya-like pile out of his own film persona.

However, Herman's seductive resolution lies outside the story of the ugly duckling who will never become a swan. LV does at least discover true love.

Surprises

Carol Allen asks Mark Herman whether his *Little Voice* can match the success of *Brassed Off*

Tuned into the angels of the north

By his own admission, the film-maker Mark Herman is 'not a big fan of the theatre'. But six years ago he went to see his friend Alison Steadman in *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, a new play by Jim Cartwright at the National Theatre. He was bowled over by it.

'What was magical was its hearthiness — its enclosed nature, its heightened

language and its reliance on Little Voice singing those songs, doing all those impressions of people like Judy Garland and Marilyn Monroe as a live performance. All the things which would make it difficult to turn into a screenplay.'

'In fact, I went with someone who was considering making it into a film. I said I'd hate to have that job. Then, 18 months ago, I was asked to make the film.'

'In the intervening years, several attempts at writing the screenplay had been made. There was even talk of moving the story from northern England to America, with names such as Gwyneth Paltrow, Brad Pitt and Meryl Streep being bandied in the main roles.'

'Then came the success of *Trainspotting*, *The Full Monty* and Herman's own *Brassed Off*.

'I was determined to keep the mood of a live show.'

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■ LISTINGS

Georgie Fame celebrates

ARTS

■ NEW CLASSICAL CDS

Elgar's Falstaff

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargreaves

LONDON

KRAPEZ'S LAST TAPE: Edward Petherbridge's touring performance as Ben Krappe in *Elgar's Falstaff* may be the last time. Also the rarely performed *Brent* — total playing time 35 seconds. Arts Theatre (0171-838 8334). Open tonight, 8pm.

POULENC CENTENARY: The French composer's 100th is celebrated with a gathering of friends and a gathering of musical entities. Felicity Lott, Ian Bostridge, the Nash Ensemble and others, perform the complete *Chansons de l'Amour* only. Wigmore Hall (0171-625 2141). Tonight, 7.30pm.

SOUTH BANK JAZZ: While the Purcell Room continues to parody young classical musicians in its PLo series, the GCH plays host to a gathering of jazz legends celebrating 40 successful years in the business. George Fame is joined in a concert by the BBC Big Band directed by Steve Gray. Queen Elizabeth Hall (0171-960 4042). Tonight, 8pm.

ACE OF CLUBS: Noel Coward's musical *Madame* (songs include *Get Away and I'm Shantung About It*) is back on the King's Head and set a steady Soho night club. Wimborne Studio (0181-540 0362). Preview from tonight, 7.30pm.

THE GOLDEN COCKEREL: After several cancellations caused by flu, Genned Rothkeles' *Elgar's Falstaff* is now back on the King's Head and set a steady Soho night club. The Royal Opera of Rimsky-Korsakov's sparkling fairytale cum political satire *Sadko* (0171-713 6000). Tonight, 7pm.

ELSEWHERE: Lawrence Foster conducts the Hallé Orchestra in an evening of mainly Spanish music. Top of the list are three pieces on the 40th anniversary of the Spanish-born *Concierto de Aranjuez* and a flute sonata by Montsalvatge. Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony concludes the programme. Bridgewater Hall (0181-907 9000). Tonight, 7.30pm.

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jessie Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
■ House full, return only ■ Some seats available ■ Seats at all prices

COURT IN THE ACT: 15th-century French farce by Heinrich and Weber, catching the law with its trousers down. Orange Tree (0181-940 3633). Open.

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE: The D'Oyly Carte Company brings Gilbert and Sullivan's joyful adventures with the pirates of Penzance to a modern major-general to the West End. Queens (0171-924 5041).

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA: Tom Goodman-Hill and Dominic Rowan play the estranged friends in *Verona* in Hall's pleasing RSC production. PR (0171-838 8891).

CHICAGO: Maria Friedman injects new blood into the bit revved of *Kander and Ebb's* musical about murder and desire. *Chicago*. Adelphi (0171-734 0052). Open.

DICK BARTON SPECIAL AGENT: Journey back to 1930s America in this radio drama, brought to life by Phil Wilmet, Ted Craig directs. Wanshouse, Croydon (0181-693 4060).

JESUS MY BOY: Tom Conti in *John Dowle's* fidelity amusing

comedy giving Joseph's side of the story. Apollo (0171-484 5070).

PETER PAN: Justin Salinger in the title role, with David Troughton as Captain Hook, in return of Flora Laird's enjoyable production. Olivier (0171-432 3000).

THE SNOWMAN: The much-loved Raymond Briggs characters soar over the snow in *The Snowman*, a 20th Anniversary production. Peacock, WC2 (0171-963 8222).

THE KING AND I: Whistle a happy tune with Phil Wilmet's Steam Factory production of the *King and I*. BAC (0171-903 2223). Open.

AFARIN NIGHTS: All Babu, Sufi and leviathan. *Aladdin*, adapted and directed by Dominic Cooke for the Christmas show. Young Vic (0171-928 0265).

CINDERELLA: Nell Bartlett and the Shockheaded Polor team stage a seriously wonderful version of *Angela Carter's* *Cinderella*. Magic provided by Paul Keating. A rental release.

LYRIC: (0181-741 8701/2311). Open.

Monster without a punch

■ NEW VIDEO RELEASES

GODZILLA: Columbia TriStar, PG, 1998. THE budget was enormous. And the monster offspring of genetic mutation, is scarcely a midget. It stomps through Manhattan, collapsing skyscrapers and sending debris flying: too big to have a personality or even any visual charm. Poor humans like Matthew Broderick's earnest scientist, Maria Pitillo's TV reporter and Jean Reno's enigmatic Frenchman fight the beast's onslaught with shallow dialogue. If you like being bludgeoned by movies, *Godzilla* will knock you flat, but if you prefer blockbusters to fun, prepare for disappointment. At least when you rent the film on video, you can lower the sound level — something impossible in the cinema.

DREAM WITH THE FISHES: Columbia TriStar, 18, 1998. A BUTTONED-DOWN drip bent on suicide joins forces with a wild heroin addict who is a few weeks away from dying. Finn Taylor's giddy black comedy set around San Francisco pays spirited homage to America's subversive films of the early 1970s, and whisks us along with enough jaunty energy to keep the toes tapping. Real feelings are not neglected either. The engaging cast includes David Arquette, Brad Hunt and Kathryn Erbe. A rental release.

MAD CITY: Warner, 18, 1998. STORIES about media manipulation come ten a penny these days, so it is just as well this trudge through familiar territory features two big stars. John Travolta plays an ordinary Joe, a museum security guard thrust into the limelight when he accidentally shoots a colleague. Dustin Hoffman is the aggressive reporter who gets the whole country watching the affair on TV. Neither performance is subtle, but this is a film of broad effects, enjoyable as far as it goes, directed with an appropriate sweep by Costa



Godzilla lays waste to Manhattan, and to all traces of subtlety, in the most unwisely hyped film of last year

Gavins, the earnest director of *Z* and

featuring Kenneth Branagh in a valiant fight trying to make impossible characters seem real, while Branagh just looks embarrassed. Rent it, and laugh.

GEOFF BROWN

MISSING: A rental release.

THE PROPOSITION: PolyGram, 12, 1998.

ONE of last year's most visible films,

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

Geoff Brown's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

THE ACID HOUSE: (18): Three dark, comic tales of drugs, drink and hallucination by Irvine Welsh. An indigenous original. Written, directed by Ewan Stewart and Karen McLeod. Director, Paul McGuigan.

STFCOM: A French bourgeois family embarks itself. Mildly diverting farce, excellently acted ensemble cast. Director, Francois Ozon.

STAR TREK: INSURRECTION: (PG): Patrick Stewart's Enterprise crew comes to the rescue of a播可斯族 who have found the other of youth. Lemuel Keste (Wm) Donald Murphy, Tony Blair, Kenneth Branagh, Jonathan Frakes.

CURRENT: *ENEMY OF THE STATE:* (15): Will Smith's most laudable effort in a political conspiracy. Exciting, fast-paced thriller, with Gene Hackman and Jon Voight.

THE MIGHTY BOOSH: Endearing tale of two outsize children, one hulking, one crippled, who pool their resources. Peter Crouch directs.

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME: (15): Robin Williams wades through the afterlife trying to find his loved ones.

Technically dazzling, but sabotaged by a woody script.

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT: (15): Splendid animation, but there's not much for kids in the biblical story of Moses leading the Israelites to the promised land. Voice talents include Val Kilmer and Ralph Fiennes.

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY: (U): Babes in Toyland. A pig faces the严謹 of the hostile city. Grotesque, mischievous sequel to the hit film *With Me in the Zoo*. Director, George Miller.

DANCING AT LUGHNASA: (PG): Compressed and perfunctory version of Brian Friel's play about five apprenticeship years in Donegal. With Mairéad Ni Mhaonaigh, Cate Blanchett, Michael McCormack and Kathy Burke. Director, P. O'Connor.

OM CONNAUT LA CHANSON: (PG): Refined relationship comedy, with a marvelous cast and lip-synched smooches of the *La Vie en Rose* era. After *Requiem for a Nun*, *Amélie* and *André*.

TWILIGHT: (16): Down-at-heel private eye Paul Newman is lured into a murder mystery, innocuous plot, but a wonderful cast. With Gene Hackman, Susan Sarandon, James Garner. Director, Robert Benton.

ELGAR: (18): Elegy. Sanguine Fan English Northern Philharmonic/Lloyd-Jones Naxos 8 553874. £4.49. * * 4/4

ELGAR's character portrait of Sir John Falstaff incorporated a broad vision of human existence: "Over it all runs (even in the tavern) the undercurrent of our failings and sorrows," he told the critic Ernest Newman. A sensitive reading therefore needs to catch the underlying melancholy as well as the surface braggadocio. And David Lloyd-Jones makes a fair attempt in this new version for Naxos. There is certainly, in the final pages, a sense of resignation after the vicissitudes of a disreputable life.

Perhaps a more generous recorded space would have put it all into better perspective but the English Northern Philhar-



Elgar: "failings and sorrows"

monia generally emerges as vixen over the willy-nilly skittering passage-work it is given.

The various episodes are helpfully cues and at budget price this is a very acceptable issue, especially with the coupling of the moving Elegy and the engaging music from the ballet *The Sanguine Fan*.

BARRY MILLINGTON

OPERA

STARS OF ENGLISH OPERA: Volume 4. Dutton CDLX 7030. ** 4/4

THE title is deliberately left open to interpretation. Only one of the operas here, *Semele*, is English and several of the items are sung in the original language. Quite a few of the "stars" were born abroad and came here to make their careers. But what's in a name? Dutton has once again raided the archives to find recordings of those who might have been heard with English companies between the 1920s and the 1950s.

Old Dutton favourites are back on display, led by two tenors expert in the art of the serenade: the liquid voice of Tano Ferendinos in Donizetti and Massenet and the robust, more patrician Heddle Nash

in Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette*. Nash also appears with Joan Hammond in Harlequin's serenade from *Pagliacci*.

Neither sounds too comfortable in Leoncavallo. Nor will the Duke in *Rigoletto* be the role for which James Johnston

will be best remembered.

Rarities are provided by Michael Langdon as the villain in Weber's *Euryanthe* and Otakar Kraus in Smetana's *Liška*.

Some of the mezzos sound too staid, but Gladys Ripley is in succulent voice with Dalila's Act 1 aria from *Saint-Saëns's Samson*, with Sir Malcolm Sargent and the Liverpool Phil.

JOHN HIGGINS

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 02498.

CHORAL

BACH: Epiphany Mass. Gabrieli Consort/McCreesh. Archa 457 631-2 (two CDs). ** * 4/4

ONE can almost smell the frankincense and myrrh rising from Paul McCreesh's latest virtuous historic reconstruction: Bach's Mass for the Feast of the Epiphany, as it might have been celebrated in the Church of St Thomas in Leipzig, circa 1740.

In this recreation of the colourful mosaic of music which formed the Lutheran liturgy, not one tiny sound of authenticity has been left unturned. The singers of the Gabrieli Consort and the period instruments are gathered in the wooden gallery around the organ; the congregational choirs of Freiburg and Dresden sing lustily

below. And in two generous 80-minute discs, church bells ring out, gospels and epistles are intoned, fantasias, preludes and toccatas are played on two historic Saxon organs. And there is even a sermon — though only, I hasten to add, six of Martin Luther's cutesy 60 minutes.

All of this frames Bag's *Mass: Breviary* in F. With McCreesh's fingerprints dancing unmissably over the sprightly articulation of the Gloria; and the *Canticus BWV 63* and its buoyant instrumental textures and their chorals.

The great event ends with both the organ prelude and the hymn *Von Himmel hoch* as a magnificent finale.

HILARY FINCH

* * Worth hearing
* * Worth considering
* * * Worth buying

OPERA & BALLET

THEATRES

APOLLO VICTORIA: 0171-552 0000. English National Ballet. **THE NUTCRACKER:** Until Dec 19. Mon-Sat 6.30pm. Mon-Sat 2pm. Sat 2.30pm. Mon-Sat 7.30pm. Mon-Sat 8pm. Sat 8.30pm.

STARLIGHT EXPRESS: SEE IT AND YOU'LL BELIEVE IT.

ELIZABETH: (15): *Elizabeth I* by William Shakespeare. Director, Trevor Nunn. Mon-Sat 7.30pm. Sat 8pm. Sat 8.30pm. Sat 9pm. Sat 10pm.

THE GOLDEN COCKEREL: New Production. Today, 7pm. TUE-FRI. Mon-Sat 7pm. Sat 8pm.

THE MUSICAL: (15): *My Fair Lady* by George Bernard Shaw. Director, Trevor Nunn. Mon-Sat 7.30pm. Sat 8pm. Sat 8.30pm. Sat 9pm. Sat 10pm.

COLIN MEE: (15): *Colin Mee* by Alan Ayckbourn. Mon-Sat 7.30pm. Sat 8pm. Sat 8.30pm. Sat 9pm. Sat 10pm.

THEATRE: (15): *Requiem for a Nun* by John Peter Ainsworth. Mon-Sat 7.30pm. Sat 8pm. Sat 8.30pm. Sat 9pm. Sat 10pm.

THE NUTCRACKER: (15): *The Nutcracker* by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Mon-Sat 7.30pm. Sat 8pm. Sat 8.30pm. Sat 9pm. Sat 10pm.

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BOOKS

Supernatural charm for animal spirits

BRENDA MADDON comes up with a fascinating thesis in her forthcoming book on the poet W. B. Yeats, *George's Ghosts* (Pleador). She thinks that the automatic writing dictated by the spirits to Yeats's wife George, who was a medium, was in fact a ruse on her part — conscious or unconscious — to get Yeats into bed with her at the right time to produce a child. "If you interpret the mystic instructions carefully," Maddon tells us, "they read just like Marie Stoops." Anyway, Yeats got some wonderful metaphors from the spirits. George got her child, and the marriage — which had been in danger — was saved.

Is a new collector's item coming on to the market? Several publishers, including Pan, Penguin and Hodder, have been sending out proof copies of a selection of their 1999 books nicely boxed up in specially printed cases. Other recent attempts to persuade literary editors and booksellers to look at advance proofs include a



*special binding for the proof copy itself — as when Cape sent out proofs of Julian Barnes's French short stories, *Cross Channel*, done up to look like a Gallimard paperback. All very well — provided the publishers make sure they correct the proofs carefully too.*

A DAGGER will be thrust through the heart of an historical crime writer in March. But it will not draw blood, for this is the Ellis Peters Historical Dagger, a new award recently created by the Crime Writers' Association in honour of Peters, the inventor of monkish crimes and mysteries. Crime stories set at any time up to 1965 are eligible.

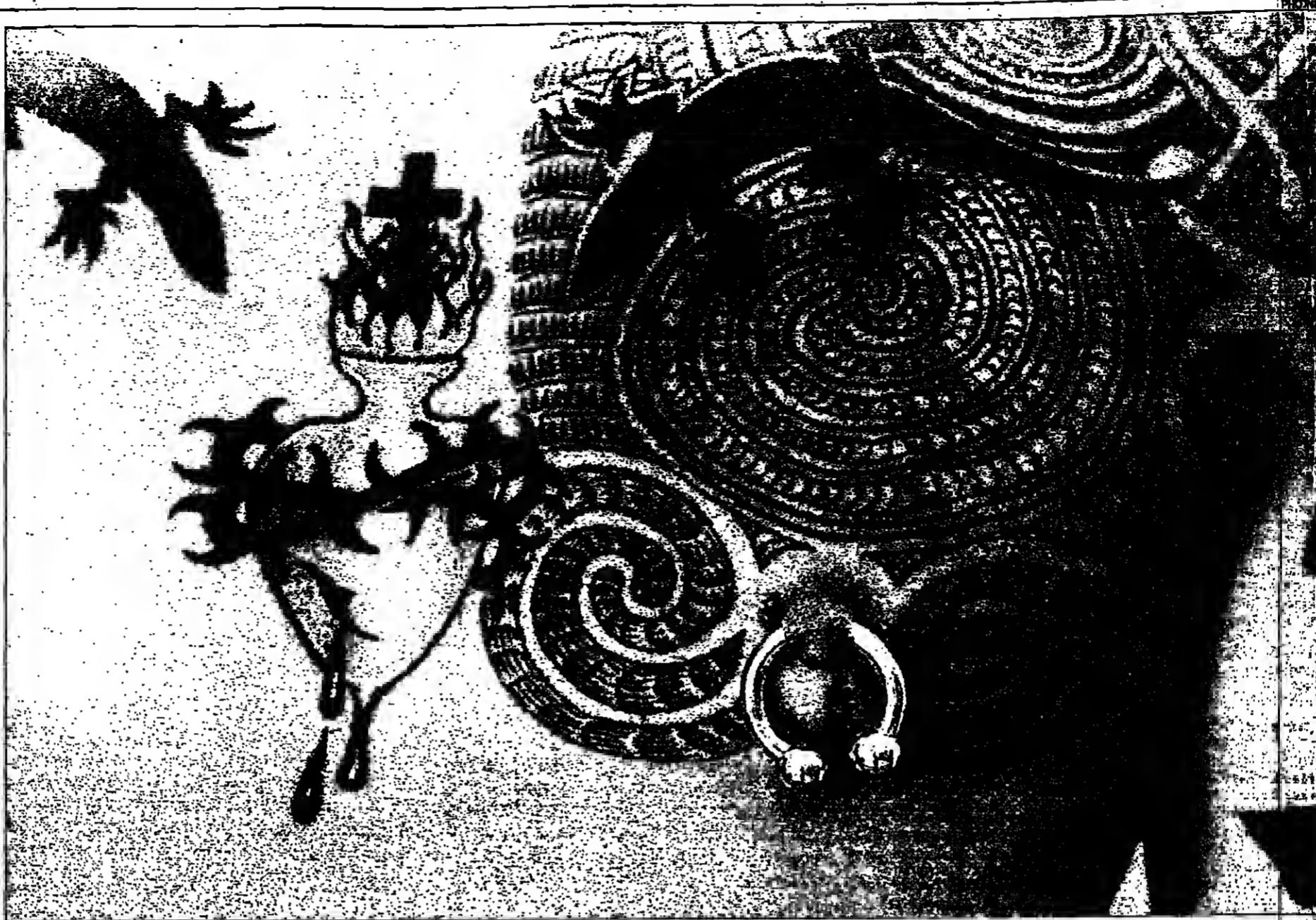
*Is this to be the year of the potato? The spud has not been much celebrated in literature, though Kipling in one of his Barrack-Room Ballads has a soldier who says his mouth is like a rotten potato. But 1999 will see both a learned history of the neglected vegetable. *The Potato* by Larry Zuckerman (Macmillan), and a powerful defence of it, *Potatoes Not Prozac*, by Kathleen DesMasiens (Simon & Schuster).*

OR is 1999 to be the year of the pig? A history of this virtuous animal, including everything from its image to its squeal, *Think Pig* by Robert Malcolmson and Stephanos Mastoris, is due shortly from the Hambledon Press. The publisher's publicity observes that it is "the ideal present to give to ex-husbands".

THIS SATURDAY IN metro

In his own words: Whitbread shortlisted novelist, Ronan Bennett, talks about his experiences as a teenager, his wrongful conviction for the murder of a policeman, his time inside Long Kesh prison and his book, the *catastrophist*.

ALSO: Harry Ritchie reviews John Burnham Schwartz's hit-and-run drama, *Reservation Road*; Marcel Berlin's *Every Dead Thing*, "the most tantalising read since *The Silence of the Lambs*"; and take number two as Don DeLillo's *Underworld* and Hanif Kureishi's *Intimacy* appear in paperback



Jenkins is a cautious guide on her grand tour of physical culture. She avoids the seamy worlds of drugs and stripping, preferring instead the beaten path of tattoos and body piercing

Just a taste of transgression

There is much less to this book than meets the eye. Having said that you can see how it began — a seductive little proposal on an American editor's desk: young hip journo from New York walks the wild side of modern culture (sex, drugs, therapy, body decoration) and sends back witty postcards from the edge. A travel book of the senses for the Bridget Jones generation. Irre-

sistible. Sure to be instant cult stuff.

Alas, many a slip between proposal and realisation. The title doesn't help — *Tongue First: Adventures in Physical Culture*. It's obviously meant to sound sexy. Slipping that little, muscular little organ into all manner of naughty places: strip joints, tattoo parlours, bags of heroin, health farms, isolation tanks, designer dress stores and an appoint-

ment with an acupuncturist. Spot the first deliberate mistake. Jenkins doesn't know the difference between cultural transgression and late 20th-century lifestyle. Now, that in itself could make an interesting thesis: decadence as an everyday appendage of consumer society, but Emily Jenkins is not the right chronicler for that. She is too much a victim of the disease to be its analyst.

What is remarkable about her book is the way she makes everything, from her first snort of heroin to shopping in a charity shop, equally unimmaculating. This is because she is more intent on observing than experiencing. It is as if she had continually got the pen in her hand. Even as the heroin hits her brain she's looking for a way to equate Coleridge with the street junkie. She continually elevates the banal to the profound. So in a chapter about body decoration she makes observations like: "By wearing make-up a person goes into dialogue with commonly held ideas about femininity. In painting my

er. Teasing genuine meaning out of popular culture is the equivalent of breeding lions out of the dead land. It may look easy enough but it takes a hell of a life force to achieve it. And for all her apparent courage, life force is not Jenkins's strong point. As a self-appointed guide through physical culture she turns out to be disarmingly wimpish. She tries heroin, but only once, and not enough seriously to lose it. She stays up for nights on end to experience the sensory deprivations of sleeplessness; but then invites her boyfriend round and falls asleep in his arms.

Admittedly she has a tattoo, but hers is tasteful. Shaving her hair off is as transgressive as she gets, and when it comes to walking anywhere near her own wild side she is decidedly prissy. She talks about stripping and sex for money, but she never tries it. She is uncomfortable with anyone touching her body during massage and when confronted with the suggestion of colonic irrigation her response is: "I should say up front that I'm not going to

get a tube stuck up my ass for the sake of literature." For a book which claims to lift you into the excesses of physical culture, this is like leaving base camp in the Himalays with a guide who turns out to be scared of heights.

I'm aware this is a cruel review. And as any viewer will admit, it is much easier to bury a book than to praise it. So let me end by saying that the faults of this book are perhaps less to do with Emily Jenkins herself than with the world that she seeks to analyse. It doesn't take a moron to observe that we are living in a culture where it is hard to tell indulgence from enlightenment on your credit card bill and where sensation is regularly mistaken for feeling. It is a treacherous terrain for the writer. Maybe if Jenkins had travelled without her pen and her contract she might have found the journey less mortifying and rewarding. But then what would he have done with the book proposal?

The never-ending story

Borges called his style Baroque, defined as that which "deliberately exhausts (or tries to exhaust) its own possibilities". For Borges, Baroque is not a term of abuse — as it usually is when applied to architecture — it is a last paragraph. It is the final stage of all art, the point where "art flounders and squanders its resources".

Borges was 55 when he wrote that. He was halfway through the century and the century was halfway through itself. As a point in time, the view in any direction was not good: war behind and Cold War present and ahead. As a point in time for Borges it was the usual question mark — and all his stories are question marks, this time applied with extra force. The force was his own work. He was writing an introduction to his early fiction, written in the 1930s.

For any writer, this would be a moment of self-doubt, but place it midway through a century of self-doubt, and the result is likely to be a reaching towards some sort of end-time. Borges's "final stage of art" is exactly the cultural pessimism that Susan Sontag argued against in her 1965 essay, *One Culture and the New Sensibility*. The argument is not over. There are plenty of people who talk about the death throes of art, though unlike Borges, most of them have never created anything in their own right.

I don't want to criticise Borges; there is no point in that. I would rather learn from him, the way one can learn from good writers, by understanding them in their context and recognising that they will always write outside their con-

text. Everyone has to live in their own time, but artists live too in their imagination, and this is a force as profound and decisive as the context of their lives. Out of the tension between context and imagination is formed the work.

Borges's work does not end. It begins. His best-known piece, *The Garden of the Forking Paths* (1944), uses the simple plot of a Chinese man, working as a German spy, escaping from his pursuer. He comes to the house of an eminent Sinologist who reveals to him the lost labyrinth of one of his own ancestors. The labyrinth, and the book that accompanies it, do and do not exist, just as the present does and does not exist. The brutal ending of the story, an event in time, if ever there was one, does not contradict the strangeness of what has been offered. It reads as a whim, a way out that is not an end but the visible tail of a forking path.

Time is the big discovery of the 20th century. From Einstein to Stephen Hawking we have become fascinated by it. We know now that time is not just a measure, it is a player, though what kind of player we do not know. Borges's fictions juggle with the possibilities of time: movement across it, *doppelgängers*, memory loops, the effects of time on time itself. Some pieces, such as *A Weary Man's Utopia* are time-travel explorations out of the mould of H. G. Wells. Others, like *Borges and I* or *The Encyclopaedia open up spaces for later writers — one thinks particularly of Georges Perec and Italo Calvino. The Garden of the*

JEANETTE WINTERSON
COLLECTED FICTIONS
By Jorge Luis Borges

Allen Lane, £20
ISBN 0 713 99269 7



Forking Paths is the basis for Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* (1979), a novel that begins itself over and over again and at its end is consumed by its own metaphors. If Borges avoids endings, he does, it is because as a writer he is suspicious of anything so neat. The undidiness of his work is a clue to its potential. Even the shortest pieces, less than a page, refuse the satisfaction of something finished. His story, *August 25th 1983*, is a dialogue with his own separate, bad-tempered self, strapping over work done and not done, admitting that it is all a failure but taking a healthy side-swipe at the vanity and terror of wanting to produce a "masterpiece".

Borges's masterpiece is the whole work, his life's work, read together, separate and complete, like his beloved *Thousand and One Nights*. This volume of collected fiction, published to celebrate the centenary of Borges's birth in 1899, is a good thing and a bad thing. Good because the fictions can be read and compared one against the other, bad because the gap of time have been closed up so that the reader is tempted to run on where he or she should pause. It is a pity that we cannot have a boxed set of the individual volumes, sometimes a much as 11 years apart.

A ndrew Hurley's translations read well and the look of the book is pleasing. Some of the earliest stories seem redundant, not perhaps because they were really sketches for the wider things written later, or perhaps because, if it's male rates that interest you will want Kathy Acker, nd Borges. And yet, Acker loved Borges' work and no doubt found space for herself therein the simultaneity of time the writer makes for one another. It is no surprise that *The Garden of the Forking Paths* should have been published in the same year as T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. Eliot's meditation on time sits beside Borges's vertical assault on it, but both contain the same truth: that there is no end; only a series of beginnings.

Borges's writing knew what Borges the man sometimes forgot — there is a last paragraph, no final sign in a late story, published in the 1980s. Paracelsus, old and despised and alone, takes handfuls of a rose thrown in the fire by a doubting disciple and pouring "the delicate ash of ashes from one hand into the concave other, he whispers a single word. The rose appeared again.

The future of Learning

FRIDAY JANUARY 8 1999



CHANGING TIMES

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk>

BOOKS



Change over to Euros

BOTH SIDES OF THE COIN
By Christopher Hulme & James Forder
Profile Books, £8.99, €13
ISBN 0 86193 107 9

IN the best hair-splitting economic and political argument since the Corn Laws, James Forder presents the arguments against the euro and European Monetary Union while Christopher Hulme speaks up for them. The debate is more lucid than usual, but no more illuminating. On one point Tweedleum and Tweedledee do agree: fast-paced change is very unnerving for the English who prefer to walk slowly up to their necks in deep waters rather than take a sudden plunge.

Terrible war
VICTORY 1918
By Alan Palmer
Weidenfeld, £25
ISBN 0 297 84124 6
THE Great War was a world war fought on three continents and many seas; and this outstanding history moves the British viewpoint from the middle distance of France and Flanders to encompass the broader strategic vision of neglected campaigns in the Balkans, Iraq, Palestine and Eastern Europe fought by many Allied forces. Palmer's style is as good as his judgement is daring. His book is a detailed and dramatic overview of the First World War that, 80 years on, has become conventional in our national memory.

Curtain up

GRACE, BEAUTY & BAUS
By Michael Kilkenny
Oberon Books, £19.95
ISBN 1 84002 008 3

SUBTITLED "Peculiar Lives and Strange Times" of "Music Hall" and "Variety Artists", this biographical dictionary is quirky in tone. The flicker of one-line or two-step turns that sparked briefly to life before falling off the stage into drink and despair is noted in an arch authorial voice that drops the curtain on his subjects like a panic-stricken stage-manager who realises that tonight's star bill is not only barely adequate but more than usually drunk. A reference book for aficionados of the tasteless, the tacky and the untalented.

Waltz along

RICHARD STRAUSS
By Michael Kennedy
Cambridge, £25
ISBN 0 521 58173 7

KENNEDY delivers a biography of Strauss that draws upon neglected first-hand source materials and analyses the crucial elements of the composer's life — his successful marriage, his long-standing collaborations with librettists von Hofmannsthal, Zweig, Gregor and Krauss, and the compromises Strauss made with the Third Reich. Lacking only a close critical analysis of the music, which Kennedy considers to have been well rehearsed elsewhere, this is a lively *Life* that redresses some balances in previous biographical excursions.

IAIN FINLAYSON

Then bid adieu to your wife, as well

Writing, as he puts it, in life's departmental lounge, the 80-year-old Ludovic Kennedy has taken the opportunity to explain why he expects nothing after take-off. His book is a sincere and well-informed defence of atheism, which argues first, that God is a fiction, and secondly that it is better for us not to believe in him.

Kennedy is an optimist. He sees the decline in religious faith not as a moral or political disaster, but on the contrary as a sign of maturity, an opening of the collective mind to the truth of our condition, from which, with the aid of science, we can begin to repair our planet and lay the foundations for the happiness and freedom that centuries of superstition have curtailed.

In a nutshell Kennedy's thesis is this: "God" is no more than an idea in the human mind and denies no reality, whether imminent or trans-

sonental. Science — notably the theory of evolution — lies in the face of those "revealed truths" which are the jealously guarded heritage of the Christian churches. Moreover, in his attempt to protect its doctrine, Christianity has had recourse to cruelty, and oppression on such a scale as to undermine its moral credibility.

For someone brought up since the war, among village atheists wedded to more or less vulgarised versions of those ideas, the first response is, I confess, a cavernous yawn. But Kennedy has the knack of awakening the critical spirit in his reader, and I found myself searching, after a while, for what I would imagine to be the Christian answer to his accusations. Here is my suggestion: "God" is certainly an idea in the mind. If you gave a complete scientific description of the world and all that is contained in it, God would not be mentioned. But if

you gave a complete scientific description of your wife, detailing all the joints and vessels and neurones, she too would not be mentioned. That thing — the subject of consciousness — which is targeted in dialogue, has no place in the science of human life. So does your wife exist? Or is she only an idea in your mind? (And what does the word "only" mean in such a context?)

It is true that science has discredited the biblical story of the creation, if you take that story to be a literal truth, but has it been able to account for the fundamental fact, compressed in that story into a wonderful image, and fully confirmed by all the crimes which Kennedy goes on to document: — the fact of original sin, and the seemingly inexorable connection between the extent of human knowledge and the extent of human wrong-doing? God moves in a mysterious way, but even he obeys the

laws of logic. And if it is true, as Kant argued, that only in a world bound by cause and effect can there be consciousness and freedom, our world must be subject to the law of causality. In which case, the world,

and all things contained in it, evolve — to the point where God becomes perceivable.

It is true that much sin has been committed in the name of Christ. As Kennedy tells us, the Spanish Inquisition murdered 10,000 innocent people over a period of 30 years. But with what do we compare this fact? With the crimes of the Hindus? Or with those of the atheists? (The Soviet Communist Party, in its heyday, managed 10,000 murders a week.)

As for chastity and virginity, they are ideals, whose moral reality lies less in the achievement than in the attempt. Their beauty as ideals cannot be understood merely by observing the sordid antics of those who betray them. Why study instead the medieval literature through which chastity shines like the sun through stained glass? Kennedy is at his most parochial in his mutterings about sex

— drawing his arguments from the sex-obsessed feminist Uta Ranke-Heinemann, and ignoring all but the downside of the thing that he describes. Look in his indictment for the names of St Teresa of Avila, or our own Julian of Norwich, and you will look in vain. But it is they who are the authorities on chastity. And if you think Christianity has been destructively repressive about sex, try living in a Muslim country for a few months.

The argument could go on for ever, and no doubt will. Suffice it to say that this honest, good-natured and one-sided book leaves everything where it was, and that its message of optimism — informing us that television and organised sport are adequate substitutes for the faith we have lost — will recommend itself only to those who have not learned to qualify the noun "optimism", as Schopenhauer did, with the adjective "unscrupulous".

Strange clothes but an emperor of tales

Peter Ackroyd is intrigued by the queer life of fable-spinner Hans Christian Andersen

The life of Hans Christian Andersen is rich in inadvertent humour. Never, perhaps, has so bizarre a figure crossed the stage of world literature. He was awkward, gangly and prone to hysterics. He was very plain and wore "grotesque" clothes, with a hat like an umbrella. He was also vain and self-obsessed in a most peculiar and theatrical way; when he was not bathed in tears, he was sending busts of himself all over Europe.

Charles Dickens once described him as a "bony Danish bore". He seems always to have been ill at ease, with a habit of saying the wrong thing or arriving at the wrong moment. He was recorded as being "simple and child-like and simple-minded in his manner". Yet from this apparently absurd person issued some of the most wonderful stories in the world.

How did it all begin? It began as a fairy story. Ostensibly he was the son of a lowly shoemaker and wash-

erwoman in a small Danish town, yet Alison Prince seems to agree with other students of Andersen's life that he was in fact of royal birth — an illegitimate child who was foisted upon two peasants who happened also to be royal servants. There is no clear evidence to support this, except for the writer's astonishingly easy access to the royal court and his equally unusual self-evident in such stories as *The Ugly Duckling*.

As a child he was shy and precocious in equal measure. He hid behind curtains to knit clothes for the dolls in his toy theatre; yet on other occasions he would recite his verse to anyone within earshot, a habit which he continued all his life to the consternation or amusement of all those who fell in his way. At the age of 15 he travelled to Copenhagen in order to become an actor, where he met with rebuffs which would have destroyed a less singular and single-minded person.

He was plainly desperate for affection and admiration, and his compatriots did their best to assist him. He went scrapping for meals like a stray cat to use Alison Prince's admirable simile, a habit he never entirely lost in the days of wealth and fame. Even in these early years he was inordinately and almost comically ambitious, turning up unexpectedly on the doorsteps of any lively patron or theatrical manager. More often than not they invited him into many ambitious people, he was lucky with his timing.

As an actor, he preferred his own scripts. His poetry was published in the newspapers, and his plays performed for two or three nights, but his initial exuberance was generally followed by dissatisfaction. His standards were, after all, very high: "Praise, infinite praise, as I have said so often, will have the most beneficial effect on me."

He felt himself to be homeless in his own country, so everywhere



Peter Ackroyd

on more than one occasion. And as so often happens in connection with sentimental 19th-century men, the evidence is ambiguous.

He could only love women at a distance. It is not at all clear, however, that his attachments to men progressed beyond romantic camaraderie; he was perhaps too writing a creature to adopt a more active role. In fact he was much more assimilated in his courtship of noble families. On those occasions, in Prince's words, "he moved in for the kill with steely determination". He combined self-pity with self-promotion, but he was honest about his ambition: "I cover honour and glory in the same way as the miser covers gold; both are probably empty, but one has to have something to strive for in this world, otherwise one would collapse and rot."

This astonishing individual is well served by this biography. Alison Prince has an instinctive sympathy for her subject, without remaining unaware of his comic potential. And despite an occasional propensity for cliché, her narrative brings him into the light.

Then, there are the famous fairy tales — among them *The Princess*

and the Pea, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Little Mermaid* and *The Red Shoes*. The first collection emerged almost by accident in an unbound booklet. They were received with "baffled silence" but slowly their audience and reputation grew.

The strange paradox of these one narratives, into which one may gaze and gaze without being able to gauge their depth, written by this awkwardly ambitious Danish ex-actor cannot perhaps be resolved. Yet there may be a clue in a contemporary's remark that he possessed "a brooding quality of strange spirituality". In that sense his bizarre behaviour needs no other explanation: it seems that he was aware of his great destiny, and somehow bounded towards it. The strange doom of the storyteller always lingered about him — if he was a fool he was a holy fool, who spoke the truth without necessarily realising that he had done so.

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN
The Fandancer
By Alison Prince
Allison & Busby, £19.99
ISBN 0 7490 0346 4

Hey Leo, meet Nick

Lisa Jardine debunks the fantasy of a friendship that never was

FORTUNE IS A RIVER
By Roger D. Masters
Simon & Schuster, £17.99
ISBN 0 684 84452 4



dists ever had anything to do with one another. In the chapter called "The Meeting", Masters contrives only to say that the two were both in Imola at around the same time in 1502 — Leonardo surveying the island for Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli in a Florentine diplomatic mission. In the chapter called "The Collaboration Begins" he suggests only that Leonardo was hired by the Florentine government to work on surveying projects, and proposes that this is "hard to explain without assuming that Niccolò was already closely acquainted with the Borgias' employment as an engineer in 1502". Tantalisingly, however, nothing survives to tell us that the two were ever even in the same room together. Which makes Roger Masters' *Fortune is a River* — a fascinating reconstruction of a unique friendship — infuriating, teetering somewhere between history and fantasy.

Actually, to be fair, it is hard to find a sencence in *Fortune is a River* where the circumspect author himself goes so far as to say that his two protagonists



Lovely and strategic city: A view of Florence in the 16th century by Pianta della Cantena

Florence vital strategic access to the sea. The result of such carefully judged overstatement is thoroughly irritating. Masters claims relatively little, and offers us a rather unexceptionable account of late Renaissance Italy. The publisher then "spins" this into a hold-your-breath piece of excitement, revealing a hitherto unknown historical story — though not, as it happens, a true one.

Roger Masters is a Professor of Government. He has his own agenda for fondly hoping his protagonists once met and shared their thoughts together. He wants to believe in what he dubbs the

A haunting for happiness
BEL MOONEY
SUFFRAGETTE CITY
By Kate Muir
Macmillan, £12.99
ISBN 0 333 74167 6



I wonder if this is the first millennium novel of the year? It won't be the last, that's for sure. In truth, the heading of the first chapter of *Suffragette City*, informing us that we are in August 1999, sets up a chain of expectations that are never quite fulfilled. The historical moment comes and goes in the narrative with little dramatic effect. No matter. Kate Muir has produced a novel which is consistently entertaining in addition to being well-constructed and stars a satisfyingly feisty heroine.

Albertine Andrews is an artist who likes to wander about with a padded stomach, to monitor the effect of pregnant women on passers-by in preparation for her series of pictures: *Confinement*. As always, *Fin de siècle Manhattan* is suffused with weirdos, wanabes, and wacky fashionables people. The city is hot and Albertine's existence has slumped to a halt in exhaustion: "I felt my life had truly bottomed out. I was right in the U-bend: my work stank, my room-mates stank, and I hadn't had sex for 187 days."

But things are about to change big time. First Albertine encounters a mysterious 30-something man wearing an eyepatch, who offers to help her with the laundry. Then

Granny Rose brings along a trunk of letters that belonged to Albertine's great-great-grandmother Agnes McPhail — who (at the turn of the last century) was the 19-year-old wife of a dour Glaswegian preacher. During the night Albertine senses a presence in her room, reads the first of Agnes's letters... and a haunting begins, marking changes in work, fortune and love of which our heroine could not have dreamt.

How the letters lead Albertine to know long-dead Agnes

in her metamorphosis from timid wife to powerful suffragette, how her ghost becomes more and more irritating and corporeal, and how Albertine's frustrating love affair with the elusive Leonardo progresses despite Agnes's warnings make for a narrative which keeps you reading avidly until the last page. Muir's style is slick and witty, and 19th-century Glasgow is drawn with as much skill as the Big Apple, suspiciously wormy at the centre.

Deceptively light, this novel has a serious side. Maybe, in creating Albertine and Agnes, Kate Muir has drawn on twin aspects of her own personality, so that the wit, froth, and cynicism of modern journalism are tempered by an old-fashioned moral sense of what life is really about: *family*. Albertine's room-mate adopts a Chinese girl; Albertine gets pregnant and decides to keep the baby; Leonardo, despite the odds, is there; and we get a happy ending as deeply rooted in convention as it is possible to be. If this is the author's recipe for happiness in the next millennium it's fine by me.

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Bargains of the week: from special offers on short breaks in trendy Dublin to diving courses in the Red Sea



■ A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and further afield, many at bargain prices

BRITISH HOLIDAYS

DESPERATE to fill their properties in the dog days of January, Britain's hoteliers are offering a host of special deals, which is good news for those who failed to escape over Christmas or new year or were so exhausted by the festivities that they need another break, *Tony Dowe* writes.

The Arcadian Hotels group is leading the way with bed and breakfast in its country house hotels in Cheshire, Kent, Warwickshire and Yorkshire costing a couple £99 a night, provided they stay a minimum of two nights.

Guests at Wood Hall in the Yorkshire countryside can join in activities guided by the gamekeeper, including hawking, badger-watching and fishing. Visitors to the "Molly B" near Chester, which has a special dinner, B&B rate for short breaks, will even find a Cheshire cheese and port awaiting them. Details: 0800-174123.

■ CONSPORT Hotels is offering weekend breaks at its Castle Green Hotel in Kendal in the Lake District for £99 for a couple, including full breakfast and use of the leisure facilities. The offer is available on January 29 and 30 and February 19 and 20, with a one-night



Country life: join the gamekeeper on a Yorkshire break

stay on offer at half the price. Details: 01539 734000.

■ MAYFAIR for two nights costs rather more, but the £350 package offered by The Chesterfield includes breakfast and accommodation for two in a room with king-size bed and a £25 voucher to top shops. Presuming that most January visitors head for the sales, the hotel offers a free foot massage and drink every evening. Details: 0171-491 2622.

■ FREE BEER and a bag of horse manure are among the extras included in Wiltshire weekend breaks centred on the 125-year-old Wadworth brewery in Devizes. A tour, drayman's lunch and the chance to muck out and exercise the brewery's shire horses all form part of the break, which costs £140 for two nights' dinner, B&B at the Black Swan, plus all those extras. Details: 01390 723259.

■ DUBLIN will become even more popular for short breaks this year as special offers come into force. Stay on Friday and Saturday at the Camden Court Hotel and Sunday will be free with Irish Ferries Holidays, which is offering the B&B package plus return ferry travel with car for £133. The price is based on four travelling and is sadly unavailable when Ireland's rugby team is playing at Lansdowne Road. Details: 0990 170000.

■ CAMPUS Travel is joining the air fares war to the Irish capital with return flights from Stansted available for students and under-26s for £54, plus tax, and from Heathrow for £61. The offer is valid for departures until the end of March, returning within a year. Details: 0171-730 3402.



St Nicholas Church in Prague four nights in a central three-star hotel are available for £249, including flights

rope at this time of year, but it is available at bargain prices. Lumi Poly offers a week in a basic hotel in the French Pyrenees for £159, based on four people sharing. The Thomson holiday starts with a flight from Gatwick on January 16. Details from Lumi Poly Holiday Shops.

■ CLAVIERE, an Italian ski resort with a grand 1920s hotel, is on offer from Crystal Ski, especially for those who can fly from Newcastle on January 24. For them, a week's half-board will cost £299, a £125 saving. The same hotel and destination is available from other airports for £395. Details: 0171-436 0827.

■ A FORTNIGHT'S cruise to similar destinations is on offer for £695 from Fred Olsen Cruise Lines, but this trip is all at sea. Sail from Dover on *Black Prince* on January 22 and call at Madeira, Lanzarote, Agadir and Lisbon. Details: 01473 292222.

■ SKIING may be the most popular holiday pastime in Eu-

rope at this time of year, but it is available at bargain prices. London to Lille, TGV to Nice and five nights' B&B. Details: 0181-289 8889.

■ PARIS is also available at a special price — if you can travel on Monday. A four-night Airtours break, including return flights from Manchester and B&B, costs only £109 with Co-op Travelcare. Details: 0541 500388.

■ SAVINGS on breaks to the "winter wonderland" city of Prague are available for the next three months from Travelers Czech. Four nights in a central three-star hotel now cost £249, including return scheduled flights from Heathrow, and can be enjoyed at weekends, as well as mid-week. Details: 01999 540700.

■ NICE is as trendy as ever at this time of year, although there may be fewer beauties on the beach. Eurotours is launching six-day trips to the Riviera from January 19, based on train travel. The package costs from £259 and includes Eurostar seats from

London to Lille, TGV to Nice and five nights' B&B. Details: 0181-289 8889.

■ PARIS is also available at a special price — if you can travel on Monday. A four-night Airtours break, including return flights from Manchester and B&B, costs only £109 with Co-op Travelcare. Details: 0541 500388.

■ SAVINGS on breaks to the "winter wonderland" city of Prague are available for the next three months from Travelers Czech. Four nights in a central three-star hotel now cost £249, including return scheduled flights from Heathrow, and can be enjoyed at weekends, as well as mid-week. Details: 01999 540700.

■ FOR something completely different, Wildlife Worldwide suggests spending Valentine's Day, and the evening of the full Moon, two days later, tracking the wolf population of the Bieszczady Mountains. The offer forms part of a nine-day natural history tour of Poland, including the chance to see bison, brown bears and eagles. The trip starts with a flight from Heathrow on February 12 and costs £995 with accommodation, meals and a guide. Details: 0181-667 9158.

■ VALENTINE'S DAY is the next special date in many diaries and the offers are already pouring in — for holiday deals, at least. A champagne weekend might be an appropriate way of celebrating and Arblaster & Clarke Wine Tours is proposing two nights in Rheims on February 13 and 14, with tours and tastings at champagne houses and several splendid meals. The cost of £249 includes coach travel. Details: 01730 893344.

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Richard Evans on a former teacher relishing the challenge of handicapping

Smith plays the weighting game

On his 21st birthday, Philip Smith and some fellow students from Southampton University decided to celebrate by attending the Derby at Epsom. It proved to be the defining day of his life — in more ways than one.

Not only did one of the friends on that glorious June afternoon later become Mrs Smith, but on his first visit to a racecourse the young history and economics student fell in love with racing as Nijinsky surged to victory under Lester Piggott.

The very next day, he pursued a belief, borne out of his studies, that there had to be some mathematical process for evaluating the performances of horses and bought a copy of *Racehorses Of 1969*, the Timesform annual containing ratings for every horse in training. Thus began a passion for handicapping.

For a quarter of a century, while he taught PE, then histo-



Smith has recently been appointed to take over from Christopher Mordaunt as senior National Hunt handicapper by the BHB

ry and economics and, finally, maths, he developed the skill during evenings and weekends. After concentrating initially on two-year-olds, he then rated group and listed horses and wrote a book on the subject, which caught the eye of Geoffrey Gibbs, the then senior Jockey Club handicapper.

"I had thought for a number of years how wonderful it would be to be one of those mysterious BHB handicappers, never dreaming that it could become a possibility. However, in 1995 a vacancy arose. Smith again caught the eye of Gibbs and suddenly the teacher, who had supplemented his income most years with some shrewd wagers, was poacher-turned-gamekeeper as he became one of those mystery men at Portman Square.

After starting off racing

on the Flat, he progressed to sprinters before taking over at the start of this month from Christopher Mordaunt as the chasing handicapper. His is an onerous task, according a rating (and therefore a handicap weight) to 2,145 horses, ranging from those who run in the lowest races at the poorer tracks, to the equine heroes who will line up at Aintree for the Grand National in April. Make a mistake — or even a perceived error, such as letting a horse in too heavily or penalising it too harshly — and the wrath of trainers, owners and punters will descend upon his head. Smith appears to relish the challenge.

"What we are trying to do is to set everyone a puzzle and to make that puzzle as difficult as possible. We don't want racing tipsters, or punters, finding a

handicap easy to solve. We want people to put time and effort into it — as we do."

At the heart of a handicapper's philosophy is the desire to frame handicaps so that all the runners have an equal chance and finish in a dead heat. Impossible, of course, but handicaps are still the toughest nuts to crack because of their very nature — yet punters relish the challenge of the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup, the Ayr Gold Cup or the Royal Hunt Cup.

"Of course, they like handicaps because they want to pit their wits against mine. That is my job satisfaction; I want to set a problem that they will find difficult to solve."

Smith continued: "Take the Ayr Gold Cup, for example, which is an early-closing race. If the job is done properly, you

get open betting and in the week leading up to the race last year they were betting 14-1 the field. I took that as a huge compliment if there had been a 3-1 favourite I would have felt I had not done my job properly because the perception of punters would have been that something had been let in lightly. Similarly, I would not want to see any 6-1 shots because that would imply they had no chance."

In recent years, there has been a perception that chasing handicaps have been easier to crack than most because winners have not been harshly penalised, which has resulted in an overall "slippage" in the ratings of chasers. Smith thinks such criticism is unfair — he believes that the 10th difference between the

median rating of hurdlers and chasers is more to blame — nevertheless, his style of handicapping chasers is likely to result in harsher treatment to winners.

"About three years ago, Mather's Tester [the two-year-old handicapper] carried out some research which showed that while a horse in a handicap had an 8 per cent chance of winning, a horse with a handicap had a 16 per cent chance of winning a handicap next time. That figure alarmed me and prompted me to adopt a slightly more rigorous approach to winners of races. Philosophically, I became slightly harder on winners and I am bringing that philosophy to jumping."

A quick glance at his assessment of last weekend's winners backs up the point.

Fourth In Line, who won Newbury for Venera Williams, has gone up 13b. "I am not trying to stop winners winning again, but I want the owners and trainers of horses behind Fourth In Line to think that they can beat him if they try again. That is the principle I will work to all the time. I want owners and trainers to feel when they run in one of my handicaps they have a chance of winning."

So, what is his tip to punters? "Don't be in handicaps," he says, in all seriousness, "unless you are prepared to put in the time. On average, it takes me an hour to evaluate a handicap, so I would back my experience against someone who looks at a race for just a few minutes."

Don't say you have not been warned.

After starting off racing

THUNDERER
12.50 Ultra Beet, 1.20 Dunde Times, 1.50 The Green Grey, 2.25 Ajnud, 2.55 Glastonbury, 3.25 Noukari, 3.55 Prospector's Cove.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: 5F-1M, LOW BEST: SIS

12.50 RED GAUNTLET SELLING STAKES
(22,019; 70) (16 runners)

1. 051 MELBOURNE LEADER (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

2. 009 CAMPIONE 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

3. 023 CASTLE ASHBY JACK 18 (G, P) Helling 4-5

4. 040 CONCER ALLAH 2 F 2 8 7 6 5 4 3

5. 004 DUNLOP 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

6. 007 ALMEREZA 12 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

7. 025 JUSTINIANUS 6 (G, P) Doss (B) 8-11

8. 000 MUNICIPAL 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

9. 003 ULTRA CHIEF 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

10. 000 STRIKER 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

11. 005 ULTRA CHIEF 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

12. 002 ULTRA CHIEF 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

13. 001 ULTRA CHIEF 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

14. 008 ULTRA CHIEF 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

15. 007 ULTRA CHIEF 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

16. 006 ULTRA CHIEF 19 (G, P, S) C Doss (B) 8-11

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THE BEST SPORTING YEAR OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Matthews or DiMaggio?

Here's a game that anyone can play — and everyone can win. It started this week across the Atlantic where that champion American magazine, *Sports Illustrated*, posed the question: "What's the best sports year ever?"

"We hold this truth to be self-evident," the magazine proclaimed, "that all sports years are not created equal ... and, in fact, most years really aren't particularly special."

Sports Illustrated nominates its top dozen years of the 20th century, but, as you might fear, their choices have a distinctly American flavour and only those with a working knowledge of sport in the United States are going to be up to deciphering the citations.

Typical, for instance, is 1941 which comes in at No 6 on their list. Here are their reasons for picking it:

"DiMaggio's 56 straight; that last 400 by Ted Williams; Louis knocks out Conn in 13th; Whirlaway wins Triple Crown as Arcaro wins his first of two; Craig Wood is first to win Masters and US Open in same year."

Those of us who live closer to Euroland and whose favourite sporting moments are rooted in Britain will have very different reasons for picking the moments to remember. So here is a top ten of the great sporting years of the century looked at through less transatlantic eyes.

There is plenty of choice — from the innocent days of the Edwardians to the highly professionalised showbusiness

spectaculars that close the century.

A year as early as 1903 gets on the shortlist because of the vision of a former cyclist and desperate newspaper editor, Henri Desgranges, who dreamt up the idea of a month-long *Tour de France* cycle race with Fr20,000 in prize-money. Even then there were recognisably modern problems, for it was in that year that the Jockey Club banned doping after two owners and one trainer had won £2 million over five seasons by betting on drugged horses.



Among the years fighting for the title must be 1977 with Red Rum romping to his third Grand National and Virginia Wade taking the ladies' title at the centenary Wimbledon. John McEnroe made his first appearance at the championships, and Liverpool, already the League champions, beat Borussia Mönchengladbach for the European Cup.

But the winning year, the one no sports lover can ever forget, must be 1981. Ian Botham looking every inch the Boys' Own hero, seemed to retain the Ashes virtually on his own. As a cricketer and as a character, with his fishing, drinking, gambling, bating and bowing, he mesmerised his adoring public.

While he was achieving the impossible, Seb Coe and Steve Ovett swapped

the world mile record three times in a nine-day purple patch. By the time they had finished, Coe had the record back with 3min 47.33sec. For thousands more, 1981 will be remembered for the first of Chris Brasher's London Marathons.

Sports Illustrated nominates as its greatest the year we have just left behind — 1998. It is one that might have been on my shortlist, too. But a young man called Beckham put the boot into that. So 1981 is the winner, though as far as the century goes there is still 1999. Who knows, that might yet top all the lists? For as every sportsman knows — or at least dreams — the best season of all is always the one still to come.

JOHN BRYANT

1981

Botham wins Ashes
Shergar strolls the Derby
Coe-Ovett swap mile record 3 times in 9 days



1924

Harold Abrahams & Eric Liddell win gold in Chariots of Fire Olympics
Paavo Nurmi gets five gold medals
Johnny "Tarzan" Weismuller swims to three golds
First Winter Olympics in Chamonix
Beginning of Hobbs and Sutcliffe opening partnership for England



1966

Alf Ramsey's England win World Cup
Jonah Barrington becomes World No 1 at squash
Jack Brabham wins world motor racing championship in the car he built
Golfer Jack Nicklaus wins the Open



1948

Fanny Blankers-Koen runs and jumps to world records in 100m, 80m hurdles, high jump and long jump at London Olympic Games
Emil Zatopek wins his first Olympic gold.
Don Bradman ends his Test career at the Oval with a Test average of 99.94



1903

Tour de France launched as publicity stunt by sport paper *L'Auto* (renamed *L'Equipe* at the end of World War II)
Cornishman Bob Fitzsimmons wins world light heavyweight title in San Francisco
Jockey Club bans doping



1936

Black American athletes, led by Jesse Owens, take seven gold, three silver and three bronze medals at the 1936 "Nazi" Olympics
Boxer Joe Louis knocked out by Max Schmeling in Yankee Stadium
Britain's first televised football match — Arsenal v Everton



1908

Marathon runner Dorando Pietri carried over the line and disqualified in London Olympic Games
Britain wins 56 gold medals at Games
Jack Hobbs scores 83 on his Test debut in Melbourne
Dr W. G. Grace ends first-class career at 59
Manchester United win their first League title



1954

Roger Bannister breaks four-minute mile at Oxford
Lester Piggott wins his first Derby on Never Say Die
Chris Chataway beats Russian Vladimir Kuts under White City floodlights

10



1977

Red Rum wins third Grand National
John McEnroe hits Wimbledon for first time
Liverpool league champions; European Cup winners, FA Cup finalists
Virginia Wade wins centenary Wimbledon
Geoff Boycott returns to help win the Ashes



2 1953

Hillary & Tenzing conquer Everest
England capture the Ashes
Sir Gordon Richards at 49, wins his first Derby
Stanley Matthews, 38, wins FA Cup Final medal



3

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED'S BEST YEARS

- 1 1998 McGwire and Sosa set baseball home-run records, Elway wins Super Bowl at last, France wins World Cup
- 2 1919 Dempsey wins heavyweight title, Chicago 'Black Sox' baseball scandal, Lenglen wins first Wimbledon
- 3 1973 Miami Dolphins have perfect NFL season, George Foreman wins heavyweight title
- 4 1975 Muhammad Ali beats Foreman in Manila, Ashe wins Wimbledon
- 5 1953 Everest conquered, Hogan wins three golfing majors
- 6 1941 DiMaggio's baseball hitting streak, Whirlaway wins US racing's Triple Crown
- 7 1908 US wins half the track golds at London Olympics; Jack Johnson wins heavyweight title
- 8 1930 Bobby Jones achieves golf's only grand slam
- 9 1966 various US sporting achievements but no mention of World Cup
- 10 1958 Palmer wins Masters, Sugar Ray Robinson wins sixth title, Pelé
- 11 1924 Nurmi wins five Olympic golds; Tilden takes fifth US Open
- 12 1969 NY Jets are surprise winners of Super Bowl; New York 'Miracle' Mets win baseball World Series
- 13 Honourable mentions: 1982, 1927

SAILING

British bid to secure funding for Olympics

By EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S Olympic hopefuls face their first big test in the build-up to the Sydney Games in 2000 starting today, as seven of the nine Olympic classes hold concurrent world championships at the Worlds '99 regatta in Melbourne.

The event, one of the biggest world-class dinghy and keelboat regattas staged with a total of 16 classes holding world championships, is being treated by Royal Yachting Association coaches as a significant yardstick on the road to Sydney. Britain has more than 60 sailors taking part.

Good performances in Melbourne are essential for all-important funding in the run-up to the national Olympic trials a year from now. A top-ten finish will be required to qualify for "elite" Sports Council funding, while any

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where in the top 20 guarantees "international" class funding, which is about a third as much. Among Britain's top contenders are Ben Ainslie, in Lasers, who is seeking to add a world championship to his European title in August and his victory at the ISAF world sailing championships last March.

Melbourne will feature the start of a battle between five British pairings in the new 49er, two-man skiff. Ian Barker, the national champion, will sail with Daniel Phillips while Paul Brotherton and Neal McDonald, the European champions, will also be competing. Andy and Ian Budgen, who were runners-up at the last world championships, will be in action along with the combinations of Tim Robinson and Ian Walker, and Ado Stead, and Zeb Elliot.

FOOTBALL

Taxmen put Portsmouth in the dock

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

THE financial crisis surrounding Portsmouth deepened yesterday when the Inland Revenue issued a winding-up order in the High Court claiming unpaid taxes of £435,000. If the debt is not settled before a scheduled court appearance on February 3, the Nationwide League first division club could be forced out of business.

Portsmouth's parent company, Blue Star Garages, was served this week with a winding-up petition by TryBuild, the construction firm that built the new Fratton End stand at Fratton Park 18 months ago. TryBuild claims it is owed more than £400,000 and its position is due to be heard in the High Court on January 20.

A spokesman for the Inland Revenue said: "Generally speaking, we try to come to some arrangement with anyone who has tax owing. Taking out winding-up petitions or bankruptcy proceedings is a last resort."

Portsmouth are an estimated £5 million in debt and losing £5,000 a day. Martin Gregory, the former chairman, is attempting to sell his 97 per cent shareholding to a consortium headed by Warren Smith, a businessman.

Les Paris, the new chairman, held discussions yesterday with Gregory and representatives of the consortium and said: "Progress has been made, but it's not like selling a secondhand car. You don't just turn up, say you like it and drive away."

Coventry City yesterday signed Mornen Hyldgaard, 20, a 6ft 5in Danish goalkeeper, but he must complete the season with Ickst, his club in Denmark, before reporting to Highfield Road in July for pre-season training.

Espen Baardsen, the Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper, has signed a new, five-year contract that will keep him at White Hart Lane until the end of June 2004.

Houllier: overseen revival

Evans, while Houllier has overseen a mini-revival in Liverpool's fortunes recently and is attempting to keep the feel-good factor around Anfield.

"If Roy wants to return and work with us, be it in the scouting or recruiting of top players, then I would be very happy," Houllier said. "There is also the youth academy to oversee, a very important role. There is no doubt that Roy would be a good addition, in whatever capacity."

Evans was offered a scouting role when he left Anfield in November, but turned it down in favour of a clean break. Since his departure, he has rested and taken on some

Brentnall takes up family business

Derby County and Derbyshire employ an unusual double act

When Derby County Football Club kicked into life in 1884 as an offshoot of the neighbouring Derbyshire County Cricket Club, none of the founder members could have imagined that, a century later, seasons without boundaries and full-blown professionalism would make playing links impossible. Now, however, an unusual family partnership is providing a common bond.

Ann Brentnall has been the physiotherapist at the county cricket club for 12 years. This weekend, in recognition of her growing stature, she leaves with the England A squad for an eight-week tour of Zimbabwe and South Africa. Helen Brentnall, her daughter, 21, has been a masseuse at Derby County FC for three seasons.

"After I'd done a fitness and sports therapy course in Bath, I came back to Derby to work in a gym, taking aerobics classes and circuit training," Helen Brentnall said. "Then Mum asked me to do some work on the cricketers, using my massage skills because the physios there were snowed under. Derby County were in the same

situation and I telephoned the cricket club to ask for help. I started at the Baseball Ground in 1996 and was made full-time at the beginning of this season."

Entering such a closed male environment did not intimidate her. "Mum used to take me, my brother and sister to the cricket, where we'd sit and play cards in the dressing-rooms," she said.

"All the players would be milling around, so we grew up around professional men's sport. I've never experienced any discrimination and Derby wouldn't have hired me if they had doubted that a woman could work here. When I started, I never thought: 'Oh, God, look at all these footballers!' It just seemed normal."

After Jim Smith, the Derby manager, insisted this season that she should be included in the official team photographs, Brentnall might have to get used to some inquisitive questioning from eagle-eyed supporters. "All my friends know what I do," she said, "but if



You can prevent a lot of injuries

someone came up to me in the pub, I wouldn't tell them because the usual response is: 'How much is it for extras?'"

Yet there is nothing shady about being a sports masseuse. "There's a big demand for it now," Brentnall said. "Injury prevention has become very important in football. I work alongside Peter Metville and Neil Sillit, the physios, and Diane Farrell, the fitness coach. The players all had

body tests at the start of the season to identify their weak spots and it's my job to work on those. Obviously, we have all the high-tech new machinery, but massage has its place, too. You can prevent a lot of

injuries by keeping muscles elastic."

In which case, the enigmatic Paulo Wanchope, the Costa Rica striker, who has legs as supple as rubber bands, is the running, jumping advert for her work. "The players have told me I'm not allowed to talk about them," Brentnall said, "but yes, Wanchope's legs are very long and he's quite brilliant. The fans get frustrated sometimes, but everyone is glad he came over to play for us. There are a couple of real jokers in the team, but there isn't one of them who won't have a laugh."

The level of banter bouncing around at the training ground is no-mean achievement, given that cosmopolitan Derby can also field two Spaniards, two Italians, an Argentinian, an Estonian, a Dane, a Norwegian and a German.



Helen Brentnall holds the trophies of Derby County's footballers in her hands

man. "It doesn't make any difference to me if you have a couple of bad games, and then everybody feels low. Fortunately, I've never seen it where we're really struggling and this season the fans seem happy that we have made a steady start." Derby are also in the fourth round of the FA Cup.

Those supporters were not entirely cheerful when the club moved its goalposts to a new, purpose-built stadium in 1997. Some of the players also had concerns.

"A lot were worried that the atmosphere wouldn't be as good because the Baseball Ground was so compact," Brentnall said, "but Pride Park is amazing and last month the final corner was finished, so it now holds 37,000. The facilities are fantastic and there's always a real buzz on match days, so I think the emotion of the move passed quite quickly. You have to appreciate history, but everyone realises this is a growing club that is looking to the future."

Someone mischievous appears to have been at work with the draw. Placed together in the bottom quarter are men as distinguished as Charlie Rotheroe, who won in 1996 and 1997, Pabari and Steve Serman, the winner in 1994, not to mention a few other extremely potent players such as Richard Sanders, the runner-up in 1993, Omar Malik, the Cambridge captain last year, and Warman.

GOLF

Pabari out to prove Rye serial winner

By JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

IT WAS no surprise that one of the first figures on the course at Rye yesterday was Neil Pabari. The tall, elegant swinger of a club, who has such an outstanding short game, was keen to familiarise himself again with the course on which he won the President's Putt last January.

By lunchtime on a glorious spring-like day, Pabari had put almost all the finishing touches to his preparations for his attempt to win the Putt again. "It takes a bit of time to reacquaint oneself with links golf," Pabari, a member at Salt Golf Club, said. "I came down and played at Royal St George's yesterday just to get in the mood. The course here is very soft. That is very unusual at Rye. It calls for a different style of golf."

Conditions yesterday morning as competitors gathered for the 72nd President's Putt, which starts today, mirrored those of one year ago, when Pabari defeated Jamie Warman by 2 and 1, holing from 15 feet for a two on the 17th to settle matters. But if conditions were similar, Pabari's game was not.

In the past year his handicap has improved from two to plus one and after a successful summer's marauding, during which he won six events on the amateur circuit in the North West, he went close to winning a place for would-be professionals at the final qualifying school in Spain in November. At the first pre-qualifying event, where 120 players competed for eight or nine places, Pabari failed by one stroke to be among that select number. He continued to practise hard and at the second pre-qualifying event he missed out by three strokes.

Someone mischievous appears to have been at work with the draw. Placed together in the bottom quarter are men as distinguished as Charlie Rotheroe, who won in 1996 and 1997, Pabari and Steve Serman, the winner in 1994, not to mention a few other extremely potent players such as Richard Sanders, the runner-up in 1993, Omar Malik, the Cambridge captain last year, and Warman.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Showpiece events avert clash

SPORTS POLITICS: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Fifa, the world governing body of football, agreed yesterday not to compete against each other.

The possibility of the world's two biggest sporting events – the Olympic Games and the World Cup – being held in the same year arose after Sepp Blatter, the president of Fifa, announced last weekend that he wanted the World Cup to be held every two years instead of four. But he and Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC president, agreed that it would be financial disaster for them to compete against each other. "There would be no winners, only losers," Samaranch said.

SKI JUMPING: Janne Ahonen, of Finland, the world champion, won the Four Hills Tour by finishing second to Andreas Wierhoelzl, of Austria, with 59.9 points in the last of the series at Bischofshofen yesterday. Ahonen extended his overall World Cup lead over Martin Schmitt, of Germany, to 115 points.

RUGBY UNION: David Humphreys has won his first cap in the European Cup semi-final against Stade Francais at Ravenhill on Saturday. The Ireland stand-off suffered a shoulder injury late in the quarter-final victory over Toulouse, the 1996 European champions, last month.

REAL TENNIS: Great Britain, the holders, will meet Australia in the final of the Bathurst Cup, the international team event for amateur players, in Hobart, Tasmania, after taking a winning 3-0 lead in their semi-final against the United States. Australia beat France 5-0.

URKEY: a. A bird
b. A wild dance
c. A louse

WORD-WATCHING: By Philip Howard

TOTO: a. Altogether
b. Another bird
c. A game

SHUNGA: a. A temporary camp
b. Dirty pictures
c. A jiu-jitsu move

URKEY: a. A bird
b. A code
c. A game

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

The Tredinnick twins had a disaster sitting East-West on this hand, from the 1998 Premier League. But there is one aspect of the deal in which they emerge with credit.

Dealer East Love all IMPs

♦ A43
♦ Q874
♦ 1093
♦ Q8
♦ 866
♦ J42
♦ A665
♦ A32

♠ 7
♠ -
♠ -
♠ Q742
♠ KJ109754

▲ KQJ1092
▲ K1085
▲ K
▲ 6

W N E S

5 C Double Pass Double All Pass

Pass Pass

Contract: Six Spades Doubled, by South. Lead: ace of diamonds.

North's double showed some high cards, rather than being out-and-out penalty.

East's double of Six Spades merely showed a defensive trick, and did not have any special significance in requesting an unusual lead.

If it had been a Lightner double, the disaster would not have occurred.

West led the ace of diamonds, and East played the queen.

Presumably East intended that as a suit preference signal for a switch to hearts. West could see that playing the ace of clubs would be wrong if East had started with an eight-card suit, so decided that the best chance was that the queen of diamonds was a singleton.

He continued with a second round of the suit, allowing declarer to ruff away East's jack and later discard his club on the nine of diamonds.

□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Sokolov ahead

With two rounds to go in the Hastings Premier tournament, Britain's top all-play-all, Ivan Sokolov has a firm grip on the lead. In the seventh round, he strengthened his position with a decisive victory against Tony Miles, of Great Britain.

White: Ivan Sokolov
Black: Tony Miles
Hastings Premier 1999

Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5
2 Nf3 Nc6
3 e4 c5
4 Nc3 e5
5 Nf3 Nc6
6 Bc4 Bb4
7 Nc3 Bb4
8 Nf3 Bb4
9 Nc3 Bb4
10 Nf3 Bb4
11 Nc3 Bb4
12 Nf3 Bb4
13 Nc3 Bb4
14 Nf3 Bb4
15 Nc3 Bb4
16 Nf3 Bb4
17 Nc3 Bb4
18 Nf3 Bb4
19 Nc3 Bb4
20 Nf3 Bb4
21 Nc3 Bb4
22 Nf3 Bb4
23 Nc3 Bb4
24 Nf3 Bb4
25 Nc3 Bb4
26 Nf3 Bb4
27 Nc3 Bb4
28 Nf3 Bb4
29 Nc3 Bb4
30 Nf3 Bb4
31 Nc3 Bb4
32 Nf3 Bb4

Black resigns

Diagram of final position



White: Laurent Fressinet
Black: James Plaskett

Hastings Premier 1999

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5
2 Nf3 Nc6
3 d4 cxd4
4 Nxd4 e6
5 Nc3 Bb4
6 Bc4 Bb4
7 Nf3 Bb4
8 Nc3 Bb4
9 Nf3 Bb4
10 Nc3 Bb4
11 Nf3 Bb4
12 Nc3 Bb4
13 Nf3 Bb4
14 Nc3 Bb4
15 Nf3 Bb4
16 Nc3 Bb4
17 Nf3 Bb4
18 Nc3 Bb4
19 Nf3 Bb4
20 Nc3 Bb4
21 Nf3 Bb4
22 Nc3 Bb4
23 Nf3 Bb4
24 Nc3 Bb4
25 Nf3 Bb4
26 Nc3 Bb4
27 Nf3 Bb4
28 Nc3 Bb4
29 Nf3 Bb4
30 Nc3 Bb4
31 Nf3 Bb4
32 Nc3 Bb4

Black resigns

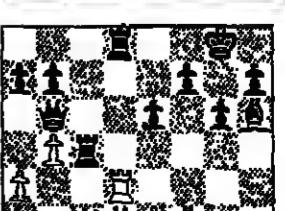
□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Arnic Georgadze, Solin 1998.

White appears to be well centralised but there is, in fact, a serious weakness in his position. How did Black uncover this?



Tour manager says English domestic cricket needs to be harder and leaner

Gooch calls on players for greater dedication

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN SYDNEY

SELFISH counties and lazy players. Graham Gooch did not spell it out quite so frankly when he assessed England's performance in the Ashes series, that ended on Tuesday with a 3-1 win for Australia, but he left his players in no doubt that English cricket suffered from two deeply-rooted maladies that required prompt treatment before a strong national team could emerge.

These things have been said before, and will be said again, but the latest defeat against England's oldest rivals gave Gooch a platform to be heard, and he used it. Without speaking too harshly of the players, he has supervised in his position as tour manager, Gooch reiterated what he has felt for many years — that English cricket is too soft, to produce a regular supply of Test-class performers.

Did the counties want to contribute to a strong Test team, he asked, and did the players themselves want to become bona fide international cricketers? He also suggested that overseas players were taking money out of the game that could be invested more wisely in the development of young players.

"I think that most county cricketers, if asked, would say they are asked to play for England," Gooch said, "but do they know what they have to sacrifice in order to do it? It won't happen just because they have a bit of talent. We can put all sorts of people round them, coaches to help them hone their skills, and make them more rounded people, but the drive must come from within."

If that was a coded message to members of this party who have not excelled and one or two others who failed to make the cut, it was also a warning that England expects a good deal more from young players than they seem prepared to offer. The problem, as Gooch admitted, is that the best players were here, with the possible exception of one or two bowlers.

County cricket, he pronounced, had to be "stronger and leaner. We need to develop our whole domestic game so that we produce better players so that when they come into the Test side, they are better equipped. If we can do that, then, long after I have gone, I think we will see the benefits when players filter through".

Despite England's customary defeat by Australia, Gooch thought that this team, under his coaching set-up headed by David Lloyd, was making progress, if slowly. He saw

no purpose in changing faces at the top simply because England had lost another series, for the personnel on the field would remain essentially the same.

"The easiest thing to do is to remove the coach, but you can't remove the players and, by and large, most of them are the best we've got. David Lloyd has done a good job. The organisation is good but we've got to get our domestic cricket right."

"We proved in the last two Tests

that we could play good cricket and compete with the best. The disappointing thing is that we hit our best form at the end of the series, which is too late. You need to play like that from the beginning."

"I can't fault our guys for the way

they have worked at their drills but we did not hang on to our catches.

In the last couple of games we held them, and we saw the difference:

You can't afford to put down good players, like Steve Waugh at Brisbane. If, in future, there is a marginal selection and one man is a better fielder, he will get the nod. We need to find good fielders, particularly in the close-catching areas."

On overseas players, he sounded quite bullish: "I would now question whether county cricket can afford to pay the money they are

taking out of the game. If you are spending £100,000 on an overseas player, is that money well spent? It is not intended as a slight on those players, but are they giving value for money?"

When England return to Test

cricket in the summer, against New

Zealand, the selectors will have to

try to resolve Alec Stewart's role.

Released from the burden of keeping wicket for the last two Tests, he

responded with some adventurous

bating at the top of the order, including a century in Melbourne.

"He gave a fresh impetus to the

innings," Gooch, who will be one of those selectors, said. "Things change from series to series but he is more comfortable in that position. We really need to find a wicketkeeper who can bat at No 7 and find batsmen who can bowl on a regular basis."

After giving thanks to Bob

Cottam, the bowling coach for his

work and emphasising that every-

thing possible had been done for

this group of players, Gooch had

covered about everything. He will

go home this week, leaving the

management of the one-day part

of the tour to David Graveney. But the sting is in the tail: how badly do the

cricketers of England want to be

Test players?"



Gooch, the England manager, with Stewart on his right, offers his final thoughts on the Ashes series at the press conference yesterday

Woolmer poses no threat to Lloyd

Ivo Tennant says South Africa's coach is not interested in helping England

Bob Woolmer, the highly-respected South Africa coach, who would be a prime candidate to succeed David Lloyd in the same role for England, said yesterday that he had other plans in mind.

Dennis Amis, the chief executive of Warwickshire and a long-standing personal friend, has asked him if he would like to return to South Africa ends in June.

David Lloyd is a very good coach

and England have a strong managerial team now, for which credit

should be given to him and to Lord

MacLennan. I have not been contacted by the England and Wales Cricket Board.

"I am only really interested at the

moment in the World Cup and will

weigh up my options afterwards.

Part-time work for the United

Cricket Board of South Africa is

one possibility and I have had

other offers for 2000. As well as

wanting a rest from the game, I

would like a break from flying

around the world on tours, which

is hard on my wife and children in

Cape Town," Woolmer said.

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around the world on tours, which

is hard on my wife and children in

Cape Town," Woolmer said.

"So even if I go back to Warwickshire, I shall continue to live here. Besides, with the exchange rate as it is, I could not buy the garage of my house if we were in England. One of the reasons I came to live in South Africa was because my back stiffness up in cold weather."

"I only have to look at Table

Mountain every day while remem-

bering that the lights are turned on

in England at 3.30 on a winter's

afternoon to realise that this is

where I want to be."

"My house overlooks the 15th

hole of Mowbray golf course and I

have joined the club so as to

become part of another society and

be able to escape from cricket. The

cricket, car bombs and Wild West

shoot-outs in South Africa are obvi-

ously disturbing and there are wid-

ely political motives for them. But I

wake up to blue skies here," he said.

Woolmer, 50, is contemplating

becoming a self-employed consultant

on the game. "I might set up

something like 'Bob Woolmer Enterprises,'" he said. "It is easy for

me, as a coach, to see what is needed

to make a team or a country suc-

cessful. And I want to write books

about the modern methods of

coaching, including the science of

the game, and on my experiences

with the emerging South Africa,

which Colin Cowdrey suggested I

should.

"I believe that if I continue to

work here, I can help black South

Africans understand what is needed

to play Test cricket — how hard

they need to work and the type of

skills they require."

"The legacy of the past has to be

addressed, but politicians here

have to realise they cannot just pick

a player off the street and put him in

the national side. Test cricket is a

game of skill and caps should not

be given to people who are not good

enough to deserve them," he said.

Woolmer will travel with the squad

in order to oversee preparations for

the World Cup in England in May

and to receive treatment. Once he is

fit, one player will be dropped from

the squad.

"I am back to county cricket next

year, I will be interested to see if

two divisions in the championship

can work. I have always

expressed my reservations about it,

but who is to say I am right? I hope

it succeeds and that this brings in

more money for players who are

likely to have shorter spans at the

top of the game."

Woolmer will captain Australia

in the opening matches of the tri-

nations tournament against Eng-

land in Brisbane on Sunday and Sri

Lanka in Sydney next Wednesday

in the absence of Steve Waugh, who

has a hamstring injury. Waugh led

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TENNIS: BRITISH No 1 ADVANCES TO QUARTER-FINALS AFTER DROPPING FIRST SET

Henman tames Moroccan

FROM ALEX RAMSAY
IN DOHA, QATAR

IT IS only day three of the new tennis season yet suddenly the holidays seem a distant memory. After six weeks at home and a leisurely first round at the Qatar Mobil Open, Tim Henman was forced back to some serious work yesterday, grafting for two hours to beat Younes El Aynaoui 4-6, 6-3, 6-0 and claim his place in the quarter-finals.

With a scoreline like that, the match would appear to have been relatively simple — a close opening set before the Great Britain No 1 got his act together and cruised home. Unfortunately for the small contingent of nervous British supporters, it was not nearly as easy as that. For two-thirds of the way, it was an intriguing game of chess between the two men who, although both having more than enough

Results 49



Dokic, the 15-year-old Australian, plays a forehand return during her Hopman Cup victory over Sánchez Vicario

weapons to hurt the other, found it difficult to hit the target on key points.

Still, to come through such a struggle so early after the Christmas break gave Henman cause for some celebration. "You want to be up against it a little bit," he said, "and I was pleased with the way I responded."

Aynaoui's reputation went before him. Last year, he missed five months of the season with an ankle injury but managed to haul himself back from the depths of the rankings to break into the top 50. By the time he arrived here, he was ready for battle and took Fabrice Santoro apart in the first round. Henman had taken a quiet look at that match and knew what he was up against, but even yet he was surprised by the ferocity of some of the Moroccan's shots.

"He's got a great first serve and a really good forehand and he bases his game around that," Henman said, trying a little British understatement. A pencil-thin 6ft 4in, made up mainly of arms and legs, El Aynaoui really clatters his service and when he gets all those limbs in unison behind the forehand it can be deadly. The backhand is not bad either. When he chooses to play the shot double-handed, he steers the ball with not

inconsiderable power and startling accuracy into the narrowest of gaps. Any net-rushing vollyer think carefully before committing himself.

The crowd was, for the most part, backing El Aynaoui and was led in its cheering by one vociferous soul whose remarkable lung-power more than made up for his lack of imagination. They had more than enough to shout about as their man engineered two break points before taking the lead with the third and serving out for the first set.

"It was a strange match," Henman said. "I thought I played my best tennis in the first set but although I created

points escaped him in the first set and a further two in the second before he finally converted one of his opportunities. Once he was ahead, he managed to repel any further challenges. Midway through the second set the Moroccan appeared to injure his neck and called for the trainer between points. The trainer could do little apart from offer a little advice and El Aynaoui responded by belting the next Henman service back past the Belgian's knees.

Henman now plays the volatile American, Jeff Tarango, who had far less trouble reaching the quarter-finals, defeating Fernando Vicente, from Spain, 6-3, 7-5. Goran Ivanisevic, who was also not prepared to waste much time, swept past Cristophe Van Garsse, a qualifier from Belgium, 6-3, 6-0 in a mere 43 minutes.

The chances I didn't take them. But if you are creating that many opportunities, you must be doing something right. Once I got that break it settled me down a little bit. The first game of the third set was crucial and to win eight of the last nine games is a good sign."

Henman now plays the volatile American, Jeff Tarango, who had far less trouble reaching the quarter-finals, defeating Fernando Vicente, from Spain, 6-3, 7-5. Goran Ivanisevic, who was also not prepared to waste much time, swept past Cristophe Van Garsse, a qualifier from Belgium, 6-3, 6-0 in a mere 43 minutes.

Australia inspired by Dokic

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

AGE and reputation counted for nothing in the Hopman Cup tournament in Perth yesterday as Spain, the No 1 seeds, were humbled by Australia, with the Sydney schoolgirl, Jelena Dokic, leading the way for the hosts.

Dokic, the world's leading junior, last year, stunned Arantxa Sánchez Vicario 6-3, 6-2 while Mark Philippoussis beat Carlos Moyá. Like Sánchez Vicario the French Open champion, 64, 7-6 before Moyá pulled out of the mixed doubles with influenza. That gave Australia a 3-0 victory and put them in a strong position to qualify for the final on Saturday.

Philippoussis, a player who has suffered from a surfeit of public attention, implored Australians to leave Dokic alone if they wanted the Belgrade-born girl, who emigrated to Australia with her family five years ago, to fulfil her potential. "Leave her alone and let her enjoy what she is doing," Philippoussis said. "She's 15 years old, full of confidence, and loves playing the game. There will be agents running after her later on. She is definitely going to become a top player, but we should just give her space."

Slovakia, the champions, suffered a setback when Karol Kucera and Karina Hubecova were beaten 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 by Jonas Bjorkman and Asa Carlsson, of Sweden.

Answers from page 47

TO TOE
(a) A louse. French military got of the 1944-5 war. "I do not know who developed lice first, but I noticed them on that march. We called them 'toto'."

URKEY
(a) A local name of a children's game. Also the person who is "it" in this game. Origin unknown. "The best game was an evening one called Urkey. One boy who was Urkey stood still by a tin can while the others hid. When a shout told that they had found a hiding place he went in search of them. His object was to see one and run home to the can, crying 'I Urkey Johnny Urkies'."

WARI
(a) A board game, originally West African but now played also in the West Indies and Guyana.

SHUNGA
(b) An example of Japanese erotic art, a painting or print of an erotic nature.

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE
1... Bx3+! wins material, e.g. 2.Qx3 Rxd4 3.Qxd4 Rcl+

THE TIMES THURSDAY JANUARY 7 1999

TELEVISION CHOICE

A warrior's legacy

Meet the Ancestors

BBC2, 9.00pm

The United States Air Force base at Lakenheath in Suffolk is the incongruous location for the latest exercise in recreating the looks and lives of our very distant forebears. The starting point is the discovery, under an old baseball field, of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery with 160 graves. One grave in particular is the focus of interest. It contains the remains of a warrior who was buried, according to the custom of 1,300 years ago, with his horse, as well as his spear, shield and sword. So there is much for the experts to work on as they try to establish the age of the warrior and what he looked like, attempt a reconstruction of the sword and ponder how the horse came to be sacrificed in order to lie beside its master.

The team researching the Lakenheath warrior in *Meet the Ancestors* (BBC2, 9pm)

The Knock

ITV, 9.00pm

A tendency towards cardboard villains and mechanical plotting has not stopped the Customs and Excise drama from making a fourth series, though it is hard to ditch a show which has a regular audience of more than ten million. The bad boys this time, at least for the first three episodes, are an Anglo-American team played by Bryan Marshall and Michael Brandon smuggling plutonium from Russia to South Africa for the manufacture of a nuclear bomb. The smuggling of rifle parts into Britain, and a revenge killing, provide material for the main subplot. As for the experts in *The Knock* there is so much going on that there is little chance to focus on the regular character. The main newcomer is David Anstrum (Mark Lewis Jones), appointed to head the City and South team over a very displeased Barry Curtis (Steve Toussaint).

Dispatches

Channel 4, 9.00pm

One of the consequences of last year's Dispatches report on battered women was a flood of phone calls and letters from men saying what about it. Hence the company programme about male violence of domestic violence. It is based on a survey of 100 men and is claimed to be the first of its kind. Nobody pretends that man-battering is on

anything like the same scale. But the intensity of the violence, and the grief it leaves in its wake, can be just as great. We hear from a 19-stone man who suffered broken ribs and fingers, black eyes and kidney damage from a partner who is taller than 5ft tall. A police officer, no less, tells how his violent partner drove him to the point of suicide. A couple of the women batters also speak. It seems they were taking revenge for being knocked about by previous male partners.

Horizon Born to be Fat

BBC2, 9.30pm

A solidly scientific contribution to the BBC's obesity season rounds up recent research into the baffling conundrum of why some people are fat and others slim, even when they eat the same meals. Meanwhile, we follow the adventures of Glenda, who starts the programme at 21 stone and ends it at a more manageable 13. But as 95 per cent of diets fail, there is every chance she will put the weight back on. The idea that putting on weight was caused by a slower metabolism was blown out of the window years ago, leaving the experts to pursue other theories. Seven years ago they seemed to have an answer, when work on mice suggested that obesity was linked to the absence of a newly discovered hormone, leptin. After a false start the leptin theory is back, suggesting that obesity may be in the genes. Peter Waymark

RADIO CHOICE

Night Waves

Radio 3, 10.45pm

Why on earth does Hollywood keep on doing it? Aren't there any new plots? Now that classic movies from the past are regularly screened on television, how can studio bosses argue that every new generation of filmmakers needs new versions of them? I presume these and related questions will be considered by Paul Allen in Radio 3's arts magazine. Clearly what has prompted *Night Waves* to include this item is the release in the US of a 1990s version of Hitchcock's 1960 thriller *Psycho* which repeats every scene and line of dialogue from the original. The only differences are the use of colour and the employment of a new cast. I was happy to read that the new *Psycho* has been given the old shoulder treatment at America's box offices.

The Head of Medusa

Radio 4, 2.15pm

The message in George Brandt's play about the 16th-century Italian sculptor Benvenuto Cellini comes across loud and clear in the closing minutes, though it is implicit long before this. It is delivered by Cellini (Tim Pigott-Smith) himself: "Art is one thing, but power is something else altogether — a sharper edge." Art is represented by the famed Florentine, and power by his intransigent patron, Duke Cosimo I (John Telfer) who commissions Cellini to produce a statue of Perseus and then treats him abominably. Brandt draws on the best source for his bolstering: see Cellini's autobiography. Whether we can believe everything he says is another matter altogether; Cellini was notorious for his bragadocio. Peter Davall

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.00am Zoo, Bell 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Kevin Grainger 2.00pm Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Chris Moyles 5.00 Dave Pearce 8.00 Steve Lamacq: The Bedrock 10.00 Trade Update with Clem McDonnell 10.10 John Peel 12.00 Andy Kershaw 2.00pm Cbe沃伦 4.00 Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Alex Lester 7.30 Sarah Kennedy 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Ed Stewart 5.05 John Peel 7.00 David Allen 9.00 Paul Jones 9.00 Barry Took's Comedy Classics: *The Men from the Ministry* 9.30 Love 40: New Bell 11.00 (61) 10.00 Girls and Guitars: *Shania Twain* 5.00 12.00 Richard Alinson 12.00 Lynn Parsons 3.00am Mtg Darts

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 Broadcast with Julian Worricker and Victoria Derbyshire 8.00 Nick Campbell 12.00 The Midday News. Presented by Annie Webster 1.00 Russian and Co 4.00 Drive. Presented by Jane Garvey and Peter Allen 7.00 News at Ten 8.00 Gyles Brandreth 9.00 News at Ten 10.00 50 years concentrating on professional boating 8.00 Inside Edge 9.00 Hoppe. Roundup of British boating news 9.30 Sportspak 10.00 Late Night Live 1.00pm Up All Night

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 9.30 Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00 Hamid 5.00 Mark Forset 1.00pm James Monet 4.30 Jeremy Clark

TALK RADIO

6.00am Bill O'Herlihy & Sally Mean 8.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00 Lorraine Kelly 2.00pm Anna Reskum 4.00 Peter Docker 5.00 The Sports Zone 8.00 James Whale 1.00pm Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air with Stephanie Hughes. Includes a review of the RSC's new production of *The Winter's Tale* at Stratford 8.00 Masterclass with Peter Hobday. Includes... 8.00 Masterworks with Peter Hobday. Includes... 8.00 The Knock with Peter Hobday 10.00 The Big Picture 11.00 The World Today 12.00 Newsdesk 1.00 Radio 3's Week in Review 2.00pm Sports Round-Up 3.15 Westway 3.30 The Vintage Chart Show 4.00 News 4.15 Record News 4.30 Insight (649 only) News in German 4.45 Britain Today 5.00 Europe Today 5.30 World Business Report 5.45 Sports Round-Up 6.00 Newsdesk 6.30 Radio 3's Week in Review 7.00 The World News 7.20 Newsdesk 7.30 World Business Report 9.15 Britain Today 9.30 Meridian Books 10.00 Newsdesk 10.30 Insight 10.45 Sports Round-Up 12.00 News 11.00 Outlook 12.45 Britain Today 1.00 Newsdesk 1.30 12.30 Westway 12.45 Britain Today 1.00 Newsdesk 1.30 Composers of the Month 2.00 Newsday 2.30 Focus on Britain 3.00 News 3.05 World Business Report 3.15 Sports Round-Up 3.30 Assignment: *Lead The World Today*

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Balfe's Easter Breakfast. A selection of rousing music to start the day 8.00 Harry Kelly, The Hall of Fame Hour. 10.00 Classical Connections 11.00 The Top 100 12.00 Lyndelle Roper's Radio 3 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto, Rodrigo (Concierto de Aranjuez) 3.00 Jamie Catto, Continuous Classics and Afternoon Phoenix 4.30 5.30 Newsnight: The latest headlines and sport updates 7.00 Smooth Classics of Seven, John Brunning introduces classic sounds 9.00 Evening Concert, Poulen (Gloria); Tallite (Concerto for Harp and Orchestra); Mihailo (La Creation du Monde); Horowitz (Piano Concerto) 1.00 Concerto (Organ Concerto) 2.00 Concerto (En Saga); Beethoven's Symphony No 7 in A major 3.00 10.00 Nick Balfe's Easter Breakfast 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Lyndelle Roper's Radio 3 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 7.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 8.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 9.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 10.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 11.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 12.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 1.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 2.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 3.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 4.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 5.00 Concerto (Armed Forces) 6.00 Concerto (Armed Forces)



SARAH POTTER 47

Derby County adopt family way of keeping in trim

SPORT

THURSDAY JANUARY 7 1999

Formula One newcomers prepare to fight ban on alternative car liveries

FIA facing collision course

THE newest team in Formula One motor racing will take on the sport's rulers today in an unprecedented confrontation, even before it has turned a wheel in its first season.

British American Racing (BAR) is probably the richest team to set up in Formula One in the modern era and is flexing its muscles by threatening to overturn the established conventions. Backed with an estimated £100 million from British American Tobacco (BAT), the team yesterday unveiled its cars and drivers, but the hype of the launch was overshadowed when the veils were drawn back.

On one side Jacques Villeneuve was in red and white overalls with his dramatically styled white car with red stripes, to reflect its Lucky Strike cigarette branding; on the other was Ricardo Zonta, the young Brazilian, in the blue and yellow of BAT's 555 brand.

Craig Pollock, the BAR managing director, wants the cars to line up like that all season, contrary to the rules and traditions of a sport in which teams have always run two cars in the same livery. Within hours of the launch, lawyers will be sitting down in Paris today to hear his case, that he has the right to determine the colours and branding of his team's cars and not the governing body, the FIA.

The action, trying to defeat Formula One's rule-makers even before the team is officially part of what is probably the most lucrative but strictly controlled of sports, is audacious, though the consequences could be far-reaching.

Money, inevitably, is at the root of the row, with BAT clearly wanting to see a handsome payback for its massive investment, in terms of huge television exposure for two of its most important brands. It seems likely, though, that Pollock will be stonewalled, with Formula One's rulers — not unused to encouraging the odd pound or two into the sport — unwilling to let commercialism run rampant.

If BAR wins, then there is nothing to stop other cigarette-sponsored teams turning out



Villeneuve, left, and Zonta display the controversial new colours of the BAR team when it was launched at its Northamptonshire headquarters yesterday. Photograph: Marc Aspland

in different liveries, presenting a multicoloured grid of billboards instead of traditional team colours that are easily identified.

Pollock was in a belligerent mood, pointing out that the issue was "critical" to the funding of the new team. Commercial branding on the cars was almost the only area of control left to the teams, he said, which was why he was prepared to push the FIA into arbitration.

"The reason we have gone to arbitration is to protect our commercial rights," he said. "What we have on our cars is the only way we have to finance our team, so we want the right to decide that."

Just as clearly, his multinational backers are not going to roll over in the face of FIA opposition and looming European Union bans on tobacco advertising and sponsorship.

Martin Broughton, the BAT chairman, gave warning that people who thought the cigarette industry had no future were wrong, and said that the sponsorship of the new team was proof of that. Instead, he asserted that millions of people "enjoyed a good smoke."

while knowing the risks that go with it, and looked forward with "creeping and surging excitement" to showing off the colourful Lucky Strike and 555 liveries via television in 1999 markets around the world.

"We are proud of what we do and that pride will be enhanced in 1999," he said.

The commitment is certainly impressive, with BAR in operation within a year, underwritten by the cigarette company's huge sponsorship. Apart from futuristic new factory, built from scratch at Brackley in Northamptonshire, the team has Villeneuve, the 1997 world champion, and Zonta, the GT champion with Mercedes this year.

Villeneuve said that he was not only attracted by a £10 million salary and a share in the business, but because he sees more immediate potential with the newcomers than with a Williams team that failed to register a victory last season for the first time in a decade.

Pollock, Villeneuve's former manager, said that the diminutive Canadian had the same "twinkle in his eye" as when he first joined Formula One from American IndyCars in 1996, and Villeneuve was brimming of confidence, particularly after a first test session in which he was fourth quickest.

"It is exciting," Villeneuve said. "It is a new team starting from scratch and the car has

shown already that it is very fast. We have to set high goals. If you go into Formula One with the right budget, the right people and the right frame of mind, then you can do well."

"Teams which go into Formula One only expecting to finish in the first ten probably never do better than that. If I didn't believe we were competitive then I wouldn't have come to BAR."

The portents are good. The car has been constructed under the direction of Adrian Reynard, whose company has scored a debut victory in every series it has entered and was one of the most successful constructors in IndyCars. BAR's vast resources mean that the

team could recruit some of the best talent, including Jock Clear, Villeneuve's race engineer, from Williams.

However, the stumbling block of what colours Villeneuve and BAR will race under remains. A decision might not be announced today, though it is beyond doubt that a settlement will have to be reached before the first race, in Melbourne on March 7.

Even Villeneuve, resplendent in his new overalls, was not sure what colour his car would be this season. With Pollock and Broughton at his side, and hordes of press notebooks poised, he declared: "It is nothing to do with me."

Basketball dispute resolved after six months

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE unthinkable was averted yesterday when the National Basketball Association (NBA) players and team owners reached a deal to end their 19-day dispute and begin a season of about 50 games during the first week of next month. NBA officials confirmed the agreement, after all-night negotiations, just seven hours before the union was scheduled to vote on the final ownership offer.

"I don't think anyone won. Both sides lost on it," Fred Hoiberg, of Indiana Pacers, said. "It will take some time to get the game back where it was. Hopefully, we can get back to work soon and put a good product on the court."

David Stern, the NBA commissioner, and Billy Hunter, a union executive director, worked out a deal that saved the sport from a humiliating shutdown, but three months of the season have already elapsed. A total of 437 games have been lost and the number will reach 659 if another month is needed to start the season. Had a compromise not been reached, the sport would have been facing the first full-season shutdown in its history.

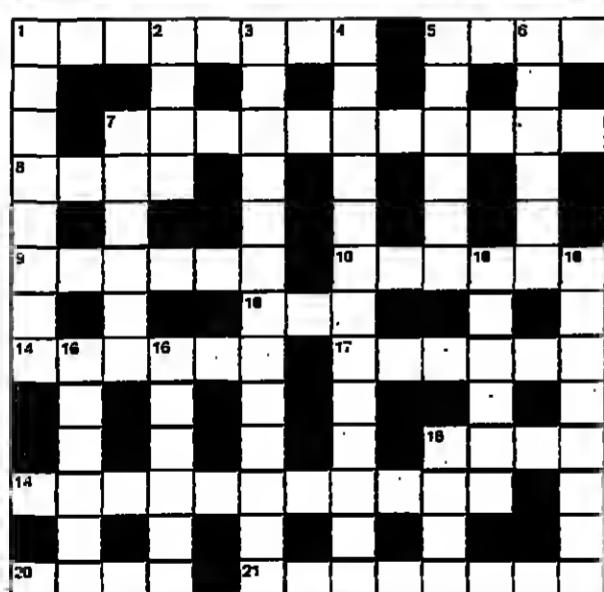
The agreement ends a bitter battle that began on July 1 when owners locked out players, claiming they were being driven into bankruptcy by huge salaries that last season took 57 per cent of the league's team-related income. NBA players have the highest average salaries in North America, sport at \$2.6 million (about £1.5 million).

"I wouldn't blame the fans if they never came back," Jeff Hornacek, of Utah, said. "Neither side is coming out of this thing looking good."

Indiana Pacers are favourites to win the NBA finals, which are likely to be staged in July. They have the core of their squad from last season, when they were eliminated by the Chicago Bulls, the eventual winners, in the semi-finals.

Their players have conducted workouts together in Indianapolis. In contrast, the Bulls are not certain to have Michael Jordan, who is considering retirement. Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman — three of their leading players last season — back among their ranks.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1608

ACROSS
1 One comes before swallow (dare) (8)
5 Oberon's assistant (MND) (4)
7 Very steep (descent) (11)
8 Depend (on) (4)
9 Think about (6)
10 Beginning (6)
13 Drink tiny mouthful (3)
14 Indelible skin design (6)
17 Business magnate (6)
18 An astringent: looks like a Scots chimney (4)
19 Insubordinate (11)
20 Sudden snake, shock (4)
21 Devil worshipper (8)

DOWN
1 Old; broken down (8)
2 Rage; power (4)
3 GP's insistence (7,6)
4 Butterly enthusiast (13)
5 Strongly effective (6)
6 Period of study; direction of travel (6)
7 One orbiting star (6)
11 Ruined (6)
12 Block of flats; rooms in this (8)
13 Ruined (6)
15 One lacking normal pigment (6)
16 Gutlet (6)
18 In a white (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1607
ACROSS: 1 Slant, 7 Tyrannic, 8 Audible, 9 Psychic, 11 Feeble, 13 Truculent, 15 Fanatical, 19 Lolita, 21 Garbed, 23 Ecuador, 24 Passive, 25 Tarry, DOWN: 1 Scarf, 2 Addled, 3 Tybali, 4 Step, 5 Cancel, 6 Ancient, 10 Social, 12 Erroneous, 14 Ramadan, 16 Ambush, 17 Locust, 18 Girder, 20 Array, 22 Deep

Premiership considers referees becoming wired for sound

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

REFEREES and their assistants in the FA Carling Premiership are likely to be wired for sound next season. In an effort to increase communication between the three match officials and help the decision-making of the referee, they will wear earpieces and microphones.

The FA Premier League, which runs the Premiership, will first experiment during matches in its youth academy leagues towards the end of this season. If that proves to be successful, the high-tech equipment will be introduced into the Premiership in time for the 1999-2000 campaign. It has already been given the blessing of Fifa, the sport's world governing body.

"We've still got to do all the costings, but I would think it's 95 per cent certain of going ahead," Philip Don, the Premier League referee officer, said yesterday. "I believe it will assist the control of the match officials and, if technology can be developed to assist the referee, not replace him, then we've got to investigate it."

Initially, only the assistants will wear microphones. "The referee will have just an earpiece," Don said. "You can control what the referee says,

but not the players. It could be embarrassing for them if the referee had a mike and it could also mean that the linesmen were deafened every time he blows his whistle."

Rugby union has used a "talking flag" system for three years, by which the touch judges can talk to the referee through a microphone and transmitter in the pole of their flags. They press a button on

the hand grip when they want to be heard.

"It looks a bit like an ice-cream cone," Nick Bunting, the national referee development officer of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), said. "The referees pick up what is said via a receiver under their shirts and attached to their shorts and then through the earpiece."

"It has gone exceptionally

well and is an excellent way of providing feedback to the referee of what is going on behind his back. It has really helped in cleaning up the minor infringements."

The radio sets, for which the RFU has its own frequency, cost £1,500 and are used by all officials in the Allied Dunbar Premiership first division. "We've had instances of officials picking up wavelengths from illegal radio operators and security firms, but other than that, we've had no problems," Bunting said.

Rugby referees use microphones only when their games are televised live. "They wear another transmitter pack to the studio and the viewers can hear their decisions straightaway," Bunting said. "The explanation is very clear and it's a brilliant way of educating the spectator." Football's assistant referees already have buttons on their flags, which they use to attract the referee's attention via his receiver.

Mike Reed, one of the Premiership's leading referees, welcomed the new move. "If it will help communication, I'm all for it," he said. "Anything that aids control has got to be good. I'd prefer it to be two-way, though. I'd like to be able to talk to my assistants."



Listening in: Brian Campsall has been one of rugby's pioneers



WHICH WAS THE GREATEST YEAR FOR SPORT? page 46

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

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RUGBY UNION 48

Sedgley Park plan to bring Wasps down to earth



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